The Mysteries of Myra

An Inspiring Novel and Motion Picture Drama

Written by Hereward Carrington.

Dramatized by Charles W. Goddard.

DR. PAYSON ALDEN blinked amiably in the flood of morning sunlight which streamed through the bedroom windows.

"Great Scott! Eight thirty-five! And I have an engagement with Prof. Hall at 9."

As he hurried toward the bathroom for his morning shower he passed the broad mirror and stopped with a thrill of surprise.

"Am I still dreaming of this weird affair?" he asked himself. On the breast of his pajamas was pinned a piece of note paper. Doubting his senses he sat down on the edge of his bed to read it.

The message was simple, even in its mystery:

"Cease your investigations of the occult. The hand that placed this warning over your heart can also stop its beating."

Alden pursed his lips into a quizzical smile as he recovered from the first surprise. A man of his splendid physique and scientific materialism was not easily terrorized by a scrap of paper, however uncanny its message. The matter-of-fact cheerfulness of the sunny room—the stimulating thrill of the morning breeze which toyed with the curtains of the half-open window—these were irresistible antidotes of morbidity.

His expression changed suddenly, as he studied the lower right corner of the note. Two triangles, with their points in juxtaposition, were surrounded by some finely drawn hieroglyphics.

"The pentagram of the Black Magicians!" he exclaimed. "None of my friends know about this except Haji. And he never jokes—he knows the seriousness of it."

Then he arose slowly and walked toward the door of the bedchamber. It was locked, as he had left it when entering the room hours before.

He hurried toward the window, half opened from the top.

Apparently all was just the same as he had left it.

Dr. Alden examined the upper portion of the two sashes with a reading glass. The delicate layer of dust deposited during the night was undisturbed on either side of the frame; in the center it had been brushed clean.

"Ah!" he muttered, lighting a cigarette and studying the situation with renewing confidence. "These devils cannot fly through the air, nor dematerialize themselves so they can enter keyholes and cracks. This particular messenger boy made his call with the aid of a rope."

He hurried to his private laboratory in the rear of the house.

This curious place was furnished with a conglomeration of appliances for the investigation of mental and even spiritual phenomena. Here were the most modern creations of inquisitive scientists for the recording, on delicate psychological instruments, of human emotions—of love, hate, fear—of all those subtle radiations emitted by the nerves.

Dr. Alden glanced hurriedly about the laboratory.

"Ah, that's good—nothing disturbed," he muttered in relief. Then he discerned a slightly opened drawer in the filing cabinet in which it was his custom to methodically record all the details of his investigations.

The doctor was a precise man. He remembered distinctly having closed all these drawers the night before on leaving his workshop.

Nervously he opened this one now, to finger each neatly labeled envelope in order. All were intact, until he came to one marked "Maynard Case." It was empty.

His valuable memoranda had been stolen since his last addenda to this baffling subject, recorded the night before.

"That's their game, eh?" His brows contracted. "Well, they know my game! I have been ridiculed for my devotion to this work, yet here is the triumphant proof that I have been following the right trail in the darkness of theory. * * * They cannot terrify me for, by heavens, I will fight them with their own weapons from behind the battlements of legitimate science."

He hurried to his desk to telephone for a messenger. Then almost feverishly he wrote a note upon his professional paper.

"I have never been able to meet her yet—it is double fortune to have my chance under these circumstances"—he told himself as he sealed the envelope.

There was a timid knock upon the laboratory door.

"The messenger boy, sir." It was the maid.

"Tell him to rush this and not to read a nickel novel on the trip."

The woman nodded and disappeared abruptly. To her, as to the other servants, the doctor was a man of uncanny ways.

Indeed, Dr. Payson Alden was a puzzle to all of his friends and relatives. Unusually successful for a man of his years, after a brilliant career in American and Continental medical insitutions, he had surprised every one by his strange retirement from active participation in his lucrative practice two years before.

Assured of comfort by a modest competence, he hermitized himself, neglecting his clubs, his social connections, and, to their great chagrin, even his kinspeople, who had come to regard his career as a family possession. His absorption in laboratory work, his mysterious, unchronicled visits to India, to China, to Egypt, and other ridiculously unfashionable "resorts" elicited sarcastic comment from the blood-tie busy-bodies.

Yet Dr. Alden had smiled with imperturbable amiability at all remonstrance and advice.

"My life is devoted to a task that means more to humanity than you can conceive," he had told them. Adding the insult of cross-advice to the injury of withheld confidence, he had ended the conference with: "Many farmers have amassed fortunes by toiling on their own crops instead of those of their neighbors!"

During these two years of solitary plodding he had atained a distinguished reputation in the investigation of the psychic.

On this he had been secretive—for he had touched upon a field of the occult barely suspected by the most forward-looking scientists.

Dr. Alden had discovered an ominous, intangible yet shockingly powerful force of psychic evil in the life about him. Mysterious, inexplicable tragedies and crimes had baffled the police of the city. In every case he had discerned subtle similarities of method—so startling in their evil resemblances that he had even confided to the president of a psychical research society his conviction that they were all the work of a single organization of "Black Magicians."

His theories had elicited nothing more than contemptuous though amiable incredulity.

But this morning had come the justification of his suspicions. Instead of the fear which might have been supposed to gnaw at his heart, there was the undeniable glow of boyish expectancy.

The man who labors with his brawn in the company of his fellows finds outlets for his inherited physical combativeness in toil, in the change, the stress, the strain, the katharsis of his workday environment.

But the man who broods in solitude, creating in a lonely universe of which he is the only tangible center, yearns for an opportunity to leave his subjective world for an adventurous relief of accumulated vitality.

As Dr. Alden returned to his bedchamber he paused by his chiffonier to open a drawer from which he took a small lacquered box. This contained a newspaper clipping, which he carefully unfolded and regarded with a curious smile in his kindly eyes.

It was cut from the society page of a metropolitan daily. In the center was the photograph of a young girl, whose low, broad forehead was framed on either side by a glory of blond wavelets, modishly yet individually coiffed, clear, deep eyes, a perfect oval face and an adorable alluring mouth, completing a picture which gave just cause for the fire of admiration in the physician's glance.

Beneath the "cut" was the simple caption: "Miss Myron Maynard, one of the season's most charming debutantes."

As Payson Alden replaced the clipping he smiled at his own reflection in the mirror.

"Well, doctor! Today you embark on the Great Adventure! and you will win—if science and love can make a winning team!"

CHAPTER II.

The Dream Lady.

MYSTERIES, like misfortunes, are said to come in threes!

The second mystery of this curious forenoon was destined to be staged far from Dr. Payson Alden's laboratory, yet close, indeed, were the mystic bonds btween the two "theaters of action."

At 10 o'clock Myra Maynard had risen from the bewildering dreams of a century-long night, to discover certain matters, simple in themselves, which cast a shadow of oppression into the depths of those blue eyes.

She sat by her bed, her boudoir slipper in hand, studying it with bewilderment.

"I cannot understand it!" she murmured, scratching the silken toe. "Candle-grease * * * how could I have put candle-grease on the toe of the slipper?"

Myra walked toward her dressing table to examine the candlestick with increasing amazement. "The wick has been burned, and yet I'm sure I didn't light it when I went to sleep * * * What did I dream?"

In vain she looked about the tasteful boudoir to conjure up by the faint memories of those queer night hours.

"I must have been walking in my sleep again," she thought. "How silly! Where can the other slipper be?"

Even as she searched the room she heard a knock on the door.

"Yes? Who is it?" she answered.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Myra."

It was the reassuringly domestic voice of the butler.

"Come in, Willis. What is it?"

The servant rattled the knob obsequiously and slowly opened the door.

"Your slipper, Miss Myra. I found it on the library floor. I'm sorry, Miss Myra."

THE MYSTIC OF THE MASTER APPEARED THROUGH THE HAZE.

The girl laughed nervously, as she took it from him.

"Ridiculous! Why should you be sorry? I've simply been walking in my sleep again. Why do you look so worried, you silly old person?"

The butler was disturbed.

"What silly stuff!" she murmured, as she brushed the golden glory of her hair. "As if there were anything really dangerous in somnambulism!"

Yet even Willis retreated to the kitchen with a look of concern foreign to his customary placidity.

As he entered the room he beheld a disturbing scene. The cook and the maid were glaring at each other with rage and horror.

On the floor between them lay the glittering fragments of a broken mirror. Cook was the first to speak.

"Do you know what that means?"

"I didn't do it a-purpose!" responded the maid. "I was just a-dressin' my hair."

"Somebody's hair will be dressed for the last time—for that glass means there's to be a death in this house," and the cook shook a vigorous fist at the shattered mirror. "Sure, there's been a curse over the place ever since old man Maynard died."

"Don't be so superstitious," interrupted Willis.

The maid added tremulously, "Maggie, it ain't safe to talk about such things, you know."

"I know—I know entirely too much," ejaculated Maggie. "I'm going to hunt another place. Don't you know what killed them other two sisters of Miss Myra? Them two poor girds were cursed—each one died sudden on her twentieth birthday."

Willis touched the cook on the arm. "Maggie, stop it! Last night Miss Myra was walking in her sleep, and I'm beginning to be afraid for her."

Maggie devoutly crossed herself to ward off a personal attack of this malignant influence. Willis hurried into the dining room with the first course of the breakfast.

"No good will come from this place," murmured Maggie, as she absent-mindedly broke two eggs into the pan of steaming oatmeal. "I seen a black cat spitting at nothing with its back up and sparks in its eyes last night. Today is Friday the 13th, and I'm going to hunt another place before the banshee gets me, too!"

CHAPTER III.

The Sign of the Devil-Worshipers.

MRS. MAYNARD read the last of the morning letters as she waited for Myra. The old-fashioned dining room, with its dark wainscoting, the quiet elegance of the carved furniture the well-chosen paintings and etchings and the walls, the great glass bowl of roses in the center of the white oval of damask linen—all these combined to give evidence of substantial aristocracy, unaffected by parvenu fads. Myra's mother, sweet-faced, silver-haired and to-the-manor-born in every poise, sat with her hands in her lap, now lost in thought. An ineffable look of sadness stole over her face, as her fancy went back to the happy mornings about this same breakfast table a few short years before. The tragedy of the room oppressed her. Yet, she forced the thoughts away, to greet the young girl who entered.

"Good morning, dear. How do you feel"

"Splendid, mother. Did I keep you waiting?"

"Not at all. But you look tired—not like yourself today. What will you have for berakfast"

"I don't feel hungry." Then she laughed at the anxiety of the butler. "Willis is so worried because I walked in my sleep last night."

Mrs. Maynard drew back as though she had been struck with the lash of a whip. The girl, with her face buried in a fresh red rose had not noticed her mother's agitation; little did she suspect the searing echoes of those moribund days when her father had acted so queerly, before his death: preoccuption by day, bitter tempers and mysterious disappearances by night. More than once, in his sleep, had he spoken of evil powers and eerie associates until the years that followed had been one hideous nightmare of apprehension. Unknown to Myra, his curious will left his entire fortune to some myterious society in case his daughters should die before their coming of legal age.

Mrs. Maynard wondered if it were wise for her to keep Myra in further ignorance of the subtle dangers impending.

"You are nervous, child," cautioned the mother. "That is causing your sompambulism. We will take a long walk today."

As the butler entered there was a ringing of the doorbell.

The maid brought in a letter, delivered by a messenger boy for Mrs. Maynard, who tore the envelope nervously. Her apprehension was unaccountably renewed. It was the message from Dr. Alden. One ominous phrase sent terror to her heart: "Kindly allow me to call on you this morning, on certain matters regarding your daughter's birthday."

Mrs. Maynard crushed the note in her hands, as Myra mischievously leaned forward to peep. She was surprised at her mother's agitation and sank back into her chair with a pout on the crimson lips.

One terrorizing thought surged through the mother's mind: Who could Dr. Payson Alden be? Why did he wish to see her about Myra's birthday?

As Myra sat there, gazing at her mother with a look which had changed from jesting petulance to disturbed anxiety, she unconsciously placed her elbows on the table, resting her cheeks upon her closed fists, with the thumbs pointed upward.

Mrs. Maynard looked up suddenly; as she was about to lift a cup of coffee she screamed.

"Oh, my God! Don't do that!" and, to Myra's consternation, her mother rushed at her almost savagely, to pull down her wrists from the accidental position. "Why did you make that sign? Who taught you to do it? You will drive me mad if you ever do it again!"

The mother was shaken with a paroxysm of sobs.

"Don't you put your thumbs by your cheeks that way, Myra. Your father used to do that in his sleep; it is the sign of the Devil-worshipers."

"Oh, mother, dear, you're absurd! What a joke! You mean like this?" and again she repeated the posture.

"Myra, Myra! You are breaking my heart!" and Mrs. Maynard covered her eyes with her shaking fingers, to run from the room.

"How silly! I can't understand mother. I never saw her so upset," murmured Myra, distressed and yet amused at the inexplicable outburst.

She sprang to her feet to follow her mother, just as Willis entered the room.

"Mr. Arthur Varney is calling, Miss Myra, he announced.

The girl's face lit happily, as she nodded. Here was a welcome friend who would not be morbid. She could ask him for a solution of the riddle.

The visitor had been ushered into the quiet library, which still reflected the bookish, antiquarian tastes of Myra's father.

He looked about with a furtive glance, as he drew off his gloves. A glance at the rug and his eyes lighted with satisfaction. He stooped to scratch the waxen droopings of the candle.

"Good morning, Arthur," and Myra's smile as she entered was radiant as she extended her hand. "Won't you take off your overcoat and make it a real morning call?"

"Unfortunately, I cannot," answered the other, walking toward the library table, after turning his dark eyes toward her with a strange, almost hungry look, which brought a blush to Myra's white brow—she knew not why.

"I just dropped in to ask you to go to the opera on the night of your birthday. It will be 'Faust.' Will you come?"

"I should love to, unless mother has made other plans. I'll ask her. But, listen," and she leaned toward him with a confidential whisper, "do you know this sign."

Tilting back her happy face she startled him by repeating the mysterious gesture which had frightened her mother.

Varney's face registered a surprising gamut of expressions.

"Where—did—you—learn—that?"

"Ha, ha! Isn't it funny? That's what mother wants to know. But, Arthur, tell me—do you know anything about the devil worshipers? I am so curious about it all."

Varney smiled as though relieved of some great fear.

"Then no one taught you that?"

"No, I just did it unconsciously, and you should have seen how absurdly mother acted. Oh, she was so upset. Tell me what you have heard of them."

Varney mopped his forehead as he laughed, to gallantly add:

"I don't know anything about devil worshipers—I, dear girl, am an angel worshiper."

Mrs. Maynard entered the room.

"Mother dear I'm so sorry I teased you," she began impulsively.

"It's already forgiven, dear—but don't do it again. It makes me nervous."

"Mother, Arthur has invited me to go to the opera on my birthday," said Myra. "It's 'Faust'—I'd love to see the Devil again. May I go?"

Mrs. Maynard had another struggle to conceal her agitation, but answered softly: "No, my dear, we have other plans. It is absolutely impossible—any other night in the week will be all right."

Myra pouted in girlish disappointment, but Mrs. Maynard's negative was adamantine. After a few bits of chatter, Varney made his departure.

At the door, he pressed Myra's hand with unusual warmth.

"Never mind, dear girl—I'll try to surprise you on your birthday night even if mother is so selfish as to want you all to yourself."

And so he went, leaving Myra wondering.

CHAPTER IV.

The Intruder.

THE entrance of Willis forestalled further discussion. Mrs. Maynard studied the card with bewilderment.

"Dr. Payson Alden—who is he?"

Then she remembered. This was the same man who had written the disquieting message.

MYRA WALKED AS THOUGH SHE WERE ASLEEP

"Tell him to wait, Willis," she instructed.

As Mrs. Maynard entered the drawing-room she was astonished to see the visitor rapt in admiration before Myra's portrait.

"What is it you wish, sir?"

Dr. Payson Alden turned abruptly.

"Mrs. Maynard, I apologize for what may seem presumption. I have come to see you for the sake of your daughter."

Myra's mother bowed icily.

"To make a long story short, I have been devoting myself to a peculiar study for several years. My purpose in your daughter's case is to prevent the commission of a great crime, for I have learned from my knowledge of the occult that——"

Mrs. Maynard's face stiffened at the mention of what was to her the most dreadful word in the language, "occult."

"You must excuse me," she began.

"But it is a matter of life and death."

"I will not discuss this subject. If that is your purpose our interview is at an end."

She nervously left the room. Alden turned to leave by the front entrance. He paused, irresistibly, before the portrait of the girl."

Why had she been marked for death?

Why had her two older sisters met mysterious deaths on their twentieth birthday?

Must there not be some reason deeper than the possibility of obtaining her inheritance, now that the two older sisters had been put out of the way?

How, indeed, was he to strike back at that intangible band of human devils to whom stone walls and distance meant nothing in their annihilating power?

How was he to locate their secret place of communion?

Unconsciously his thought turned to his own personal interest in this beautiful young girl. It was curious how his early professional interest had been turned into a strong love for a girl he had never formally met.

In the days when he had first gained inklings of the mystery overshadowing her future he had made it a point to study her impersonally without her knowledge.

He had observed her at theaters and at dances. He had broken his rule of hermit life to attend and study her every action.

"Here am I," he mused, "a man many years older than Myra Maynard, as sentimental as a schoolboy. I never believed in love at first sight—and yet each time I have seen her it has been an additional first sight, for every day I have discovered new charms. Love—love, as mysterious as anything else of the spiritual. All my science cannot drive it out of my heart."

He turned disgustedly away, just as a silvery "Good morning" greeted him. There before him stood the incarnation of all his secret dreams and hopes.

"What is the mystery about me?" she asked with girlish curiosity.

"You must pardon me, Miss Maynard," he replied, courteously. Alden believed in playing fair, and there was so much at stake that he dared not antagonize her mother.

"What is all the fuss about this last day or so?"

She made the forbidden sign!

Alden was shocked out of his usual calm.

"Why, why, that is the sign of the devil worshipers! You mean this?"

Sitting at the table he rested his head upon his clenched fist, with thumbs pointing upward. Mona realized now that the curious attitude gave the semblance of diabolical horns. She laughed at this ridiculous whimsicality.

"Yes, isn't it funny?" and she faced him, holding her own hands in similar position.

At this juncture her mother returned to the room, to behold the ghastly spectacle of her own daughter and this intrusive stranger making the horrendous sign to each other. She screamed and called for the butler as Alden sprang shame-facedly to his feet.

"You monster!" she cried, hysterical in her terror. "Go! Leave my home! Willis, show this person out!"

She caught at Myra and dragged her frantically from the room, as the glaring Willis marched behind Alden.

Alden returned to his laboratory, to work with feverish hope upon his deductions of the case. His heart was singing, despite the apparently unsolvable nature of the affair, for had he not met and spoken with his divinity?

That evening Arthur Varney was the guest of Mrs. Maynard and Myra at dinner in the charming old house.

A skulking figure moved across the grounds of the Mason estate.

The man approached a window from which a stream of light poured genially forth. Peering in, he beheld the three sitting at the table.

He seemed satisfied, and with a surprising familiarity with the house, he darted down the side of the building, trying each window. At last he found one unlocked. He opened it softly and clambered through the aperture.

The intruder had entered the library.

On tiptoe he walked toward the stairs, using a pocket bulblight to pick his way by occasional cautious flashes. He tried first one door, then another, until he found the room which seemed the particular object of his search.

He entered this: it was Myra's.

He took a small glass phial from a pocket, and with the aid of the pocket light he rapidly smeared a dark stain over the knob. Then he left as silently as he had come, taking no jewels or other valuables with him, for this nocturnal visitant was no burglar.

CHAPTER V.

The Underground Chamber.

AT midnight, as the last stroke of 12 died out from the dark belfry of the old church down the street, Myra stirred in her sleep, sighing as in some unhappy dream.

The girl sat up in bed and stepped to the floor, slowly adjusting her bed room slippers.

Her lips moved as though she were speaking, yet no sound came forth. With a curious tenseness she walked toward the dressing table, her eyes barely opened. The girl quietly lit the candle and then nodded, as though indicating obedience to some unseen instructor.

Turning toward the door of her bed chamber, she turned the knob and advanced with the candlestick in one hand, the other held forward as though she were being led by the invisible director of this curious trance.

Unerringly she walked down the stairs to the library.

Her fingers brushed along the woodwork until they reached a secret spring. The panel slid back, and Myra advanced—drawn by the irresistible urge of the unknown potencies.

She descended a steep stairway to a sinister chamber cunningly concealed within a solid inclosure of the foundations of the old house.

This was the secret communion place of Myra's father, and since his death nothing had been disturbed. It had been constructed in the house by workmen from another city while Maynard and the little girls had been visiting at the seashore.

The faded black velvet hangings which shrouded the stone walls made it seem much larger than its actual dimensions.

Cobwebs hung in the corners. A pall of dust covered the strange altar which stood in the corner farthest from the rickety stairway. This was black and covered with a moth-eaten scarlet cloth of some Oriental fabric.

In the center of this lay a parchment scroll, held in place by a long Hindoo dagger, forcibly jabbed into the wooden top of the altar.

As the sleep-walker entered, the candles casting grotesque shadows across the barren floor, a number of rats, absolutely white, scurried into the corners of the stone chamber in which they had been mysteriously dwelling through these long years. What they could find in this room to eat was a mystery: their small red eyes sparkled venomously, emitting a dull glow.

Myra advanced to the altar, placing the candle beside the impaled parchment. She knelt before it, and even as a shudder passed through her thinly-clad shoulders, her fingers tremulously tightened and she placed her clenched fists, thumbs up, in the position which she had so acidentally learned that morning.

In the light of the flickering taper Myra leaned forward to read the threatening words. She drew the dagger from the table—her hand moving as though it were propelled by some unseen arm. Her muscles tightened against the force—she was resisting it with all her youthful vigor; and yet the glittering weapon came nearer and nearer her breast.

The girl was sobbing.

She averted her head, as though pleading inwardly with the tyrannical will of the occult.

The dagger point was now firmly pressing against her breast. Suddenly the supernatural power seemed to jerk her arm high in the air, plunging the cold steel blade downward—not into her flesh, but into the altar, where it once more impaled the parchment.

Her hand relaxed limply, and dropped to her side. The rigidity of her pose now melted away, and she drooped like a dying flower as she buried her face in her hands, to sob miserably.

Then she spoke the first sounds which had come from the wan lips since her entry.

"Yes, yes—I will obey at the appointed hour."

With a low moan the girl rose unsteadily to her feet, caught up the candle. Her left hand outstretched as before, she ascended the steep steps as though led by her invisible guide.

She closed the panel noiselessly.

The trance was unbroken when she extinguished the light, to fall exhausted into the comfortable embrace of the coverlets. In a twisted position of discomfort, Myra lay as one dead until the sunbeams strayed into her window, to play their tonal reveille upon the fantastic figures of the Bokhara rug by her bedside.

When Myra awoke she discovered a peculiar stain upon the fingers of her left hand.

"What can this mean?" she thought. "I must not tell poor mother, or she would have another nervous spell."

During breakfast the telephone summoned Willis to the library. He returned to announce that Dr. Alden was insisting on an interview with Mrs. Maynard.

Myra's mother fairly jumped in her chair—then, with a frightened look she answered: "Tell that man that I do not care to speak to him again."

And Myra, her arched brows in an anxious frown, dropped her eyes to a rose as she nervously plucked the petals one by one.

CHAPTER VI.

The Spell of Black Magic.

LATE that afternoon Arthur Varney dropped into the Maynard home for tea. He observed the haggard lines of Mrs. Maynard's face, and even Myra's nervousness was apparent.

More curious still, however, was Varney's lack of the usual sangfroid—he smoked four cigars during the hour of enforced gayety. There was unusual tenderness in his manner as he turned the music pages while Myra strummed the piano skillfully but distraughtly at this and that bit of the classics. Once he walked to the window to watch the busy heavers shoveling coal down the chute to the furnace room in the basement.

But he did not see them.

Myra was playing a heart-gripping nocturne of Chopin. Varney's face, unseen by either of the two women, was twisted into paroxysm of emotion and tears trickled down the face so generally phlegmatic in its cold calm.

"I can't do it—I love her—I can't!" he muttered between clenched teeth.

Then his thought changed and a frightened look came into the black eyes. "But if I don't obey—ugh!" and he shuddered as might one pinioned in the choking grip of some monstrous reptile.

A man approached up the drive, garbed the same as the coal heavers.

He passed them unnoticed, reaching the kitchen door, where he asked the

(Continued on Eleventh Page.)

General Increase in Price Of Flat Work Now In Force In All Laundries

A variety of reasons is responsible for the general increase in the cost of flat work prevailing in all Washington laundries, according to a statement made by the manager of the Arcade Laundry, Fourteenth street and Park road northwest.

"The eight-hour law, necessitating an extra shift of workers," he said, "is the principal reason for the advances made. Even were this not the case, there are other conditions to take into consideration.

"The Arcade Laundry is content to employ only the most competent help. We pay our employes top-notch salaries, not only for humanitarian reasons, but because we know it promotes efficiency and gives our patrons far better work.

"We're equipped with the latest and most improved machinery, designed to minimize the wear and tear on materials. For instance, we have a new machine for laundering shirts, operated by steam pressure, which eliminates the rubbing process. A similar machine is used on collars. Another attends to the pressing of Palm Beach suits, a feature with us.

"The improvement, as a result, has been so pleasing that our new rates more than meet the approval of our patrons. Several wagons and automobiles are now required to make collections and deliveries."

The office of the Arcade Laundry was formerly located in the rear of the Arcade, but for the convenience of patrons an office is now maintained in the front of the main building, on Fourteenth street.—Advt.

The Mysteries of Myra An Inspiring Novel and Motion Picture Drama

Written by Hereward Carrington.

Dramatized by Charles W. Goddard.

(Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.)

Dr. Payson Alden, a physician, who has spent years in study of the occult, discovers the plot of a group of Black Magicians and Devil Worshippers to cause the suicide of Myra Maynard so that her inheritance may fall to them. He endeavors to warn her mother of the danger, but is rebuffed. While Arthur Varney, a wealthy clubman, who loves her and pays persistent suit, is taking tea with the girl and her mother, a mysterious coal shoveller slips into the house, hurries up the steps and daubs the knob of the door leading to Myra's room with a black substance, which later shows that in her somnambulism she walks to a secret panel of the library. Through this she enters a hidden chamber of the mansion. In this room, under the hypnotic influence of the Black Order, Myra Maynard automatically promises to obey mandates of the unseen mentors.

The next evening, while the residence is guarded by a drowsy private detective, the girl repeats her sleep-walking. It is the eve of her twentieth birthday—the anniversary of the suicide of her two sisters. Again she enters the hidden chamber and is about to plunge a dagger into her heart when Dr. Payson Alden, who has been smuggled into the residence wrapped in the folds of a rug, reaches her in time to save her from death. She wakens dazed and frightened, to realize that she is the victim of unseen forces of evil. Dr. Alden attempts to warn her of the evil, but her mother's hysterical fear of all things psychic, hinders his efforts at assistance.

CHAPTER IX.

The Chamber of Horrors.

IT all seemed so pleasant, so comfortably normal, when Dr. Payson Alden paid an early afternoon call at the Maynard home.

He could hardly believe that only a few short hours before the beautiful heiress drifted helplessly between life and the black beyond, in the mysterious current of unseen evil. Yet there was the window through which he had made his forcible entry for the fortunate reconnoitering expedition.

He felt triumphant, in a sense.

But a foreboding chill, a vague fear for another than himself forced itself upon him, as he walked thoughtfully up the long drive, through the grounds of the estate.

"If she would only get away from this place she might escape the clutches of these assassins," he thought. "I must suggest it to her mother without frightening either of them too much. Then I will fight it out alone, until the battle is won. That is the best plan, after all."

But the best laid plans have the worst manners in the world: in this case they followed their usual obstinate habit and proceeded to go wrong.

Myra greeted him with just enough suggestion of intimate interest to send a thrill through his once impervious heart. The scientific coldness of the physician was not proof against the mellow glow of those surprising blue eyes.

"Oh, Dr. Alden! It seems ages since I saw you last," she began, as she led him into the drawing room. "Mother has been so nervous this morning that she could not bear to tell me all about it."

Myra smiled and dimpled, as she continued eagerly:

"And poor Willis, the butler, has been spluttering pompously, and with what looks to me more like stage fright than anything else. When I ask him questions he turns turkey red and stammers. Five times today, doctor, I have found him poking under chairs and davenports, beds, and chiffoniers with a broom handle. Here is the way he looks at the nooks and crannies!"

And Myra laughingly rolled her eyes, puffing out her cheeks and then staring in a droll way, as she used the doctor's walking stick, to imitate the suspicious Willis.

"Well, he is not to be blamed, Miss Maynard," responded Alden, rather seriously. "If he had been as cautious about investigating your cellar and the panels on the walls he might have saved you from all this."

He paused in thought for an instant.

"Why, what do you meaas? Saved me from what?"

"From death! And something besides that, something more intangible. I must tell you what happened to you, Miss Maynard, for this is not the end of the affair."

Myra regarded him with an incredulous look on her girlish face, but the intense sincerity of his manner made her realize after a few words that there was no jesting matter. The physician explained the happenings, so far as he was able, of the two dramatic nights before. He told of his clandestine visit to her room, where he placed the black stain upon the door knob, so that when she repeated her sleep-walking she might leave the traces along whatever banisters and walls she touched.

He told of his later discovery, while she was playing the piano for her mother and Arthur Varney, of the finger prints upon the panel and the discovery of the secret panel.

Myra's eyes dilated with horror, as Alden described her descent into the chamber of horrors below.

When he narrated his own third "burglarious" entry, rolled in the rug, by which he surprised the drowsy watchman and followed her barely in time to save her from suicide in the black chamber, the girl trembled and covered her eyes with her delicate fingers.

"Oh, I can remember some of it now!" she exclaimed, faintly. "The candle, the knife which dropped from my hand, and your face in that dim light. Then it all went black, until mother bent over me."

She sprang to hed feet and approached him with an appealing gesture of the subtle hands.

"Doctor, doctor, what does it mean? What have I done that is wrong to bring all this worry to poor dear mother? I do not mind for myself, but she is so thoughtful, so generous—and after the death of father, and then of my two sisters, she has had such a burden of sorrow to bear in her heart. I can hardly believe that such a gruesome thing could happen—where is the panel?"

Alden went to the library, as she followed eagerly.

"There he said. "And here is the secret spring which opens it."

He rubbed around with his fingers for a moment, and suddenly the door slid noiselessly back, leaving a threatening maw of darkness which caused her to clutch his arm timidly.

What a surprising glow of strength that trusting touch diffused through the physician's veins! He was continually surprising himself, and yet his calm face did not betray his feelings.

"Come, we will go down, and I will show it to you, just as I saw it. I have my pocket light, which is better than a candle."

He drew a small storage battery lamp from his coat, and directed its concentrated rays on the base-board of the panel.

"Ah, see this!" he stooped down, and kneeling, examined the groove with interest.

"What is it?"

"Oil! Nice, smelly, machine oil! And it is fresh. The occult may deal with spirits, but it does not overlook such matter of fact materialistic things as squeaky panels. Some malevolent spirit has been here, within the last few days to grease up this little runway, so that it could be opened without a sound. It might be well to set a trap for that same astral force."

"Astral? Materialistic? Malevolent?" the girl looked at him with a look of comical bewilderment, as her smooth brow wrinkled over the strange words. "I don't know what you are talking about. Spiritualism—and such silly rubbish?"

"Not so silly as some people would like to think," was the surprising response. "I will explain them all to you in good time. But, come—follow me."

Somehow or other, Myra experienced an almost childish trustfulness in this broad-shouldered, assured stranger—for she had hardly exchanged a score of words with him since their first odd introduction. She went down the steep steps, as he indicated the path before them.

"There, do you see the altar?" cried Alden. "You knelt before that, and there is the scroll. I must take that with me to study the fabric, and take a photograph of the handwriting. It is a tell-tale clue which may some day tell more than its writer ever expected."

Myra was transfixed with a growing horror, as she gazed about the black-draped chamber.

"And then what did I do?"

Payson Alden did not answer. He quietly raised the dagger from the floor where it had fallen, swayed back and forth before the infernal altar, and motioned as though to plunge it into his own breast, simulating Myra's gestures of the night before.

With a scream, she sprang toward him and caught his arm.

"There, you're imitating what I did," and he chuckled grimly. "Now, little lady, hurry up those terrible steps again, and see that you never come down here. You must get away from this house, with your mother. Sleep-walking runs in your family, and we mustn't let this thing happen again."

The girl was silent as she obeyed his instructions, given in that smooth tone of professional command which becomes second nature to the practicing physician.

Arthur Varney had compelled her interest by his intense personality in an entirely different manner from that of this mild-mannered but direct man of mystery. It seemed as though che had been used to his advice and directions for centuries. She flushed at the curious realization of it.

"You must leave this house before you succumb to the fate which overtook your two sisters!" were the next startling words, as she reached the free air of the library once more.

Myra gasped.

"Do you mean to say—that—my—sisters—killed—themselves? * * * And that way?" she cried, as the color left her cheeks.

Alden bowed gravely.

"Yes. Many people know it. But your mother was wise to keep you ignorant of the fact until now. It is time to know the truth, Miss Maynard, for you have much to face."

Myra stood facing him, her face drawn in anguish at this unexpected knowledge of the tragedy which had surrounded her in the home of her girlhood. She felt a hundred conflicting emotions—then yielded to the most natural one. She turned and ran precipitously toward the telephone on the library table.

"What are you going to do?" cried the doctor.

"I'm going to telephone the police. We must learn who was responsible!"

He caught the instrument and forced the receiver down on the hook, cutting off the open connection.

"The police are the last ones in the world to intrust with such a secret. They would bungle it hopelessly, and perhaps pave the way for another successful murder."

"Murder?" and Myra whispered the dread syllables.

"Yes, foul murder of the most villainous plotting. Murder unseen, unheard by even the victims."

"How have you learned all this?" Myra demanded. "You never met my mother or myself until two mornings ago. Yet you seem to understand more about our family than either of us. Who told you?"

Alden shook his head quietly, as he drew away from the telephone instrument.

"No one told me by word of mouth. But have you not heard of the curious way in which one ship at sea, or some amateur on shore, with a wireless instrument, picks up fragments of messages passing through the ether between two other communicants, whom he neither knows nor sees?" The girl nodded. "Well, Miss Maynard, that may give you an idea of a little bit of what I have done. There have been a hundred and one indications, to my investigations, of this crime. I have studied you and the case much longer than you realize. And that is why I have come into your life—to help you."

She looked into his eyes with that glorious trust which had thrilled him before.

"I believe you, Dr. Alden," she answered, simply. "And I know you can solve the problem; I know it!"

"So do I," he declared, "but only with your fighting help. We must work together, you and I. If you have the nerve to risk your fortune, your sanity, and even your life in the pursuit, I feel that we can catch the murderer."

She caught his hand, and all the determination of her budding womanhood, all the bravery and fire of youth, were in that clasp.

"I vow that I will sacrifice anything, everything, to learn the secret and bring the criminal to justice," she cried.

"Be sure that you dare to" he cautioned. "It is more serious than you know, more horrible and more powerful. I have studied it for years, and I am only on the verge of deeper knowledge of it. I have given up my career for this work, to be a psychic detective, for the betterment of my fellow-men, and for the perfection of White Magic, in overpowering the Black Sorcery of this unseen criminal!"

As he spoke, Mrs. Maynard had entered the library.

"Why, Myra," she expostulated. "What are you talking about?" She felt a vague mistrust of the physician, despite the gratitude for his rescue of Myra. The girl began to explain, and her mother became indignant.

"Occult! Occult! Psychic! Magic!" The words became almost a wail, as she nervously wrung her hands, "I heard those words for years until they ruined my whole life. Myra, you must not talk about such things. We must leave this accursed house at once and never return."

Alden had barely heard her. He was engrossed in his own campaigning; but suddenly his plan had changed. He turned upon her quickly.

"No, Mrs. Maynard, you must not leave. At first I thought it wise, but now I realize that this house, reeking as it does of the magnetism of this unknown power, is an absolute 'receiving station' of the forces which we must fight. We must trap them by tapping their wires, and by using their own weapons against them."

"Rubbish!" stormed Mrs. Maynard, as she left the room, but Myra did not echo the thought.

CHAPTER X.

The Surprising Mr. Varney.

At about this time another character of the strange developments was amusing himself in an odd way. Seated in a big lounge chair in his handsome bachelor apartment, Arthur Varney pored ferverishly over the supply of morning newspapers which had been brought to him by his valet.

"Queer!" he muttered, as he nervously bit his fingernails until the blood came. "Not a line! I've read them all over twenty times, from the first column to the smallest advertisement. Not a line."

He rose, pushing the sheets angrily to the floor. He went to the telephone, resting on a small mission table at the side of the room.

Three times he essayed to lift the receiver off the hook and as many times he dropped it back nervously.

The black eyes burned like evil coals; his voluptuous mouth was bluish gray, no longer hued with its customary full-blooded scarlet. Heavy puffs sagged beneath either eye, and across his forehead was some faint lurid mark suggestive of a healed burn. Deep lines chiselled on either side of his nose, and a purple hollow in either flabby cheek gave further evidence of a night of wild debauch.

And yet a man seldom lies to himself, when he is all alone: Varney rose, and staggered toward the black wood buffet, talked to himself, as though to force some spirit into his aching body.

"I need a drink, that's it. I need some whisky. Of course, I do. Not a drink after all these awful hours. No wonder I'm groggy on my legs"

He poured out an extravagant tumblerful. His mouth twisted as he winced over the bite of the liquor on his parched throat.

"I'm burning alive We'll I'll risk it now."

He walked to the window, drawing his dressing gown about him, and raised the sash, to blink out at the glorious flood of sunshine. A Gila monster might have cast the same malevolent glare at the blue vault of the sky as it emerged from its hole in the desert send dunes

This time he lifted the receiver from the hook, and in a thick voice called for a number. Soon he received the connection.

"Ah, can I speak to Myra?" he feigned a calm politeness that was in strange contrast to his trembling fingers.

Then he heard her voice over the wire, although bewilderment held him dumb for an instant.

"Yes, yes. What is it, please?"

"Myra, Myra—it is Arthur. Good morning, dear girl."

There was a note of irritation which surprised him as the girl's voice came back.

"Oh, it's you. Well, I didn't recognize your voice at first. You must have a cold." She hesitated, and then as an afterthought quickly added: "Arthur, we made a dreadful discovery last night. Come over as soon as you can and I'll tell you about——"

Alden, at this juncture was endeavoring to convince Mrs. Maynard that it was absolutely essential to the girl's protection that he be allowed to continue his investigation with her assistance. The mother had finally given a grudging consent—yielding, as she believed, to the lesser of two evils. Alden had not eavesdropped at the short telephone conversation; perhaps later developments might have been different had he done so.

Myra, after Varney's promise to call immediately, left the library and entered the drawing room in time to hear her mother's admonition:—

"Dr. Alden, I don't know why I have yielded to you. I will absolutely forbid any further experiments of this dreadful nonsense after today. No good can come of it, and a world of evil may result."

"But, Mrs. Maynard, I believe your daughter has unusual phychic power—she has shown in several ways that she is mediumistic. I want you to be with her when we try it, and then your mind will be at ease. It is very simple."

The girl came to them, her radiant eagerness again tinting the oval face with the wonted peach-blow,

THE GIRL DREW AWAY FROM ALDEN

MYRA FELL INTO HIS ARMS —

"What is it? I'm so anxious to help you, Doctor?"

"Just to try a little hypnotism, to get you into a receptive mood to complete the message which was interrupted last night."

It took Alden many minutes to convince Myra's mother that hypnotism would not destroy her daughter's will-power, nor weaken her mind. With the skill of a medical lecturer he explained the process, and finally was ready for the seance.

Myra's message to Varney had caused two surprising conflicts of thought in that getleman's mind. His words, as he hung up the receiver, had been, "Thank God!" And the sincerity with which these unfamiliar words crossed the lips of the secret service member of the Black Order was in baffling contrast to the sudden look of terror with which he regarded the telephone, as it rang again.

"Who can that be?" was the prelude to a muttered volley of imprecations, as Varney steadied his nerves with another libation at the handy buffet.

The bell persisted in its baleful summons.

At last he summoned up the courage to answer. The message was short and to the point.

"Are you there, Varney?"

The man answered in a frightened monosyllable.

"Varney, go to the house at once and find out why you failed!"

There was an ominous silence. Varney licked his parched lips and waited for further instructions.

"Come to me at once, as soon as you have learned the situation. You have had one lesson. Is another needed? Lay your plans, to complete the task before midnight tonight. This is your last chance!"

And the word ended in a curious hiss resembling the warning of the cobra!

Arthur Varney dropped the receiver into place, and sprang toward his bedroom. A quick survey of his features convinced him that his appearance would betray his nervousness. He rang the bell for his valet.

"A quick massage, James. I did not sleep well last night, and I look ten years older than I should. Hurry, now, and call me a taxicab, for I have an important call to make."

Within a few minutes Varney was ready for his mission. What a turmoil was racking his mind as he entered a taxicab to start on the long ride to the Maynard home! His feelings toward Myra had been concentrated by the warp and woof of the curious wooing, which had its inception in the will of the master, to develop into an absorbing passion tugging at his heart strings, demanding a betrayal of the very powers to which he owed his present wealth, and threatening a destruction more horrible than pen could depict should he let love assert itself!

Back in the library, Myra had implicity obeyed the instructions of the physician.

Her mother gave voice to a despairing remonstrance, which only intensified the brave girl's determination.

"Mother, I hate these occult things worse than you do. But Dr. Allen and I are going to start right now!" she declared.

There was a finatity in her voice which set aside further objections. Her mother sank nervously into a chair to watch the dread proceedings.

Before beginning, Payson Alden summoned Willis.

"Under no circumstances at all must we be disturbed. Miss Maynard and her mother are very busy—so keep any one from entering this room. It is a matter of life and death. Do you hear?"

The butler nodded frigidly and left the library, wondering at the surrender of the mother.

"Now, sit in this big chair, Miss Myra, and relax. Don't think of anything. Let your muscles, your nerves and your mind just 'drift' and keep watching me. There, that is a good position and we will soon be finished."

Alden had closed the big doors between the library and the drawing room. It was well, for even as he was making the preliminary gestures of the hypnotic suggestion the machine bearing Varney had sped up the driveway.

"I must see Miss Myra at once," said the caller, as Willis met him at the door.

"But, sir," and Willis coughed apalogetically

Varney, tossing aside his hat and coat, had excitedly started down the hallway.

The butler intercepted.

"Excuse me, sir," he said, touching the other's shoulder. "The doctor has ordered that she must not be disturbed!"

Varney whirled about nervously.

"The doctor Is she sick?"

"No sir; begging your pardon, sir, she is in the library. Will you be so kind as to wait in the drawing room?"

Varney grunted in acquiescence, as he cudgeled his wits to grasp the mystery.

He sat down for a few minutes, straining his ears to catch any explanatory words from the other room. But there was no sound. He lit a cigarette and endeavored to reason out the meaning of the mystery.

But he could arrive at no satisfactory conclusion.

"The doctor? The doctor? I wonder if it can be that scoundrel, Dr. Alden?"

He found the answer to the mental query as he silently tiptoed toward the big doors. Peering through the keyhole he beheld a sight which answered more than this one question and stimulated a dozen more in his mind, which were more disturbing than even this strange sight.

For there in the big easy chair sat Myra Maynard. Her eyes were closed and the long lashes drooped over the white of her pale cheeks, as the head lay relaxed on the padded chair back, surrounded by its golden aureole of ringlets.

Dr. Payson Alden, his hands gently pressing and stroking the girl's forehead, was speaking to her in soothing tones which were inaudible to the eavesdropper.

Yet Varney understood too well the nature of his strange work, and he continued his watch with twitching fingers. His own fate was deeply concerned in this psychic adventure, and yet he hesitated to interrupt until he could master the secret of the physician's campaign.

The girl had finally sunk into the cataleptic state of advanced mesmerism; the doctor drew back to survey the result with an apparent satisfaction.

Unseen by Varney, Mrs. Maynard sat riveted to her chair with terror, yet watching the proceeding with uncontrollable satisfaction.

"Now, do you hear the voices?" asked Alden in a tone distinct enough to be heard by the man in the drawing room.

The girl moaned and writhed in some mental struggle, although her eyes did not open.

Her hands opened and closed nervously and her head twisted and bobbed, as though she were enduring intense physical pain. Many times her lips moved, but no sound came forth, despite the repeated urgings of the physician.

At last a tremendous spasm of muscular stimulation seemed to bring utterance.

"He says——" she murmured, in a monotonous, colorless voice, not at all like her own silvery tones. "He says—what does he say?"

Alden leaned over her, excitedly.

"Let that friend from the other world who communicated last night finish his warning now!" commanded the physician, tensely.

The girl continued her indistinguishable mutterings, as Alden strove vainly to understand her.

At last he noticed a twitching of the fingers of her right hand. She made a curious spiral motion with her arm, as though writing in the air.

Alden grasped the opportunity at once. He drew his prescription pad from his pocket, and placed a pencil in the girl's fingers, which closed about it tautly.

"Now, write it!" he commanded. He held the pad beneath her hand, and waited

Through the keyhole Varney observed this demonstration with growing alarm. Suddenly he sprang to his feet and hurried toward the front door, which he adjusted so that he might re-enter without ringing the bell.

At first there was no result with the pencil, until Alden held Myra's hand gently in the encircling guidance of his own fingers, to force the pad closer to the point.

After several meaningless scrawls at last legible letters appeared. Myra's mother had drawn near, controlling her tendency to hysteria in the interest of the weird actions.

The pencil advanced, at first with incomplete letters, and then it spelled:

"Y—y—y—y—Your—Your——"

"Yes, yes—go on!" directed Dr. Alden.

By this time Varney had reached the side of the house, from where he could peer into the library window. A cautious glance showed him that Myra was facing the opening, while the physician and her mother were too engrossed to observe him. The girl's eyes were still dreamily closed, in the spell of the mediumistic trance.

The pencil slipped from the paper.

Again Alden guided it, and new words appeared:

"Your—your father"——

Mrs. Maynard started and would have spoken, had not Alden warned her with an irresistible dominance.

"Your father wishes"——

Then came another pause, as Varney peered in once more. His black eyes seemed to emit veritable sparks of malevolence, as he moved his own hands with sinuous gestures, toward the face of the unconscious girl.

The massage progressed, as Alden droned his commands in the girl's ear.

"Your father wishes—towarn—to warn you—against the Black—the Black"——

There was a suddan twitching of Myra's fingers, as Varney concentrated all the force of his tremendous will power into one supreme effort.

Myra's hand pressed the pencil upon the pad with a force which broke the point and her eye-lids fluttered, as she opened her blue orbs in suprise at the expression of her mother and the doctor.

At the same instant, Varney dodged back from his position.

He rushed back toward the front entrance of the residence as Myra struggled to her feet.

A quizzical smile brightened her face, and brought forth the dimples once more.

"What have I been saying?" she asked, and then her glance dropped to her right forearm, which seemed twisted in a muscular cramp. "Oh, doctor, my arm pains me dreadfully. What have I done to it?"

"There, there," and Alden began to manipulate the muscles. "It will be all right in a little bit. Open and close your fingers."

Mrs. Maynard was sobbing.

"Oh, Dr. Alden, this is wicked! It is against all nature and I know that you will ruin Myra's health by such sinful practices."

Alden impatiently held out the piece of paper.

"Do you call that sinful?" he demanded. "We have already established a communication which may save her life and even yours. Please do not interrupt, Mrs. Maynard, until we have learned the complete message."

Myra read the words with avidity. Her face flushed as she puzzled over the meaning.

"I don't remember touching the pencil doctor," she said. "And yet, I do recall sitting here. I could hear your voice, seemed to see myself sitting in the chair, as though I were an entirely different person. Wasn't it strange?"

A knock broke in upon the conversation, and Mrs. Maynard breathed a sigh of relief. Any interruption would be a welcome grace.

"Come in," she said, and Varney pushed back the large doors, to enter with a suggestion of malicious amusement upon his dark features, as he nodded to Alden.

"I hope I am not interrupting," he began.

Mrs. Maynard grasped his hand eagerly, as she began to pour out an incoherent account of the experiment.

"How surprising!" and Varney plied both mother and daughter with innocent queries which brought forth the story of the preceding night. Alden, with the ladies' permission, indulged in a quiet cigarette smoke, as he studied the physiognomy of the visitor, without vouchsafing any comment. Varney refrained, to Alden's surprise, from any questions addressed to the physician.

At last Varney ventured advice.

"You shouldn't allow it, Mrs. Maynard. I've known of people going insane from tampering with this spirit business. It is very silly and dangerous."

He was holding the paper in his hand, and he smiled incredulously at the words.

"I think you have been playing a little joke on yourself, Myra. Take my advice and let it all alone after this. I'm surprised at a physician and a man of science, like Dr. Alden, wasting time with such childish stuff."

Alden answered his irony with an amiable shrug of the shoulders. Myra, quick to sense the possibility of bitter discussion, walked toward the drawing room.

"We must have some tea," she said. She rank the bell, and Lisa, her maid, stopped in the hallway, by the door.

"Yes, Miss Myra. I'll come right in as soon as I throw out this old plant."

Myra looked at the pot which the girl held in her hand.

"Oh," she said regretfully. "My beautiful azalea—it has been withering lately. I loved it so, for it made such splendid color in my bedroom."

"Well, why worry—there are hundreds of florists in the city, and there's no reason why you should not have another," said Varney. Then suddenly looking at his watch, he added: "But, gracious, how time flies. I have an appointment at my club, and must be getting down there. I rushed over to see if I could help you in any way. But, I see nothing so terrible in somnambulism, nor in that stupid writing matter. Just avoid it, my dear girl. I'll try to see you later."

He ignored the physician, who watched the departure with quiet amusement, although a serious firmness showed about his mouth.

As the door closed, he addressed Mrs. Maynard:

"I hope you will not misunderstand my efforts, Mrs. Maynard. But these things are not as foolish as some people would think. You realize what my investigation accomplished last night. I have not told you all I know, even yet. But there is one thing I want to ask you, for your further protection."

Mrs. Maynard grudgingly admitted his help.

"Yes, you may be right, doctor. I will do whatever I can, But, I beg of you not to repeat this mysterious magnetism or whatever it is. I shall go mad if I have much more of this to worry about—what can I do now?"

"You can invite me to stay here in your house tonight, to ward off a repetition of anything like that of last night. Will you forgive my presumption? You know how worthless that other watchman was!"

Mrs. Maynard hesitated, and then agreed. It was strange, and to her almost unreasonable—yet the racking memories of the preceding evening and of those other tragedies of former years made her finally welcome the presence of the physician.

"Oh, well, I presume it is necessary," and both Alden and Myra laughed at the resignation of her enforced hospitality.

The doctor took the girl into the library to explain more of the science of the mind, and that realm beyond the mind, which they were soon to explore.

CHAPTER XI.

The Hand of the Master.

THE black-robed worshippers of the Black Order were busy in their weird ceremonials before the revolving disc. The ominous sworls of the incense twined in the dim light from the half-concealed lamps, losing themselves in the gloomy heights of the big chamber.

Some unusual incentive seemed behind the energy with which the celebrants of the black mass bobbed back and forth in their rhythmic movements, as they changed the dread "mantra," on which the evil minds concentrated to project their vile powers.

A summons from the outer world was mysteriously imparted to the leader, who stopped his incantations, to approach the entrance.

More knocks and a few muttered words, resulted in the admission of Arthur Varney.

A hurried request for an interview with the supreme chief of the Black Order was borne in by the master of ceremonies.

Three crashing detonations of the brass gong gave Varney the signal that he should enter. A robe about his own shoulders, he stumbled into the dark inner chamber, where once more the sinister vision of the evil one grew into luminosity and then fafed out.

Varney made a low obeisance, with his clenched hands to his cheeks, thumbs upturned in the secret sign of the devil worshippers.

Before he had raised his eyes the snake-like gaze of the master was fixed upon his nervous face, as the red glow permeated the black-draped room.

"What do you wish?" hissed the black master.

"Master, heed me. We are in great danger!"

The master sneered and smiled, with that cold-blooded leer which suggested a crocodile to the affrighted Varney.

"Fool! There is no danger for the elect. Who dares threaten us?"

Varney explained what he had observed and heard in the Maynard house, as his preceptor stared through narrow slits of eyes, whose expression was baffling in its hard concealment of the thoughts behind it.

He handed to the master the paper upon which the automatic writing had been registered by Myra.

Then, for the first time within his memory, did the leader of the Black Lodge betray excitement. The master glared with a look of fury at the straggling letters.

(Continued on Page Sixteen.)

ANURIC!
The Newest Discovery in Chemistry

This is a recent discovery of Doctor Pierce, who is head of the Invalids' Hotel and Surgical Institute at Buffalo, N. Y. Experiments at Dr. Pierce's Hospital for several years proved that there is no other eliminator of uric acid that can be compared to it. For those easily recognized symptoms of inflammation—as backache, scalding urine and frequent urination, as well as sediment in the urine, or if uric acid in the blood has caused rheumatism, it is simply wonderful how surely "Anuric" acts. The best of results are always obtained in cases of acute rheumatism in the joints, in gravel and gout, and invariably the pains and stiffness which so frequently and persistently accompany the disease rapidly disappear.

Go to your nearest drug store and simply ask for a 50-cent package of "Anuric" manufactured by Dr. Pierce, or even write to Dr. Pierce for a large trial package (10 cents). If you suspect kidney or bladder trouble, send him a sample of your water and describe symptoms. Dr. Pierce's chemist will examine it, then Dr. Pierce will report to you without fee or charge.

Note:—"Anuric" is thirty-seven times more active than lithia in eliminating uric acid, and is a harmless but reliable chemical compound that may be safely given to children, but should be used only by grown-ups who actually wish to restore their kidneys to perfect health, by conscientiously using one box—or more in extreme cases—as "Anuric" (thanks to Doctor Pierce's achievement) is by far the most perfect kidney and bladder corrector. Dr. Pierce's reputation is back of this medicine.—Advt.

THE MYSTERIES OF MYRA

An Inspiring Novel and Motion Picture Drama

Written by Hereward Carrington.
Dramatized by Charles W. Goddard.

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(Continued from Page Twelve.)

"It is the hand writing of John Maynard, her father!" he cried.

The master pondered for many minutes, as Varney waited with a premonition of further danger.

"Ah, now I have it," muttered the other. "What can be placed within her room tonight without attracting suspicion? Think and tell me!"

And as Varney racked his brains for reply a strange connection was being established between this secret meeting place of the spirits of evil and the library of Myra's home.

Dr. Alden had espied the rock-crystal globe upon the carved table, and he picked it up with interest.

"Here is a very interesting medium of clairvoyance, Miss Maynard. Crystal gazing is one of the surprising developments of the psychic which surprises the most skeptical."

Myra restrained, through some girlish impulse of shame from telling of her experiments under the suggestion of Arthur Varney, with this same crystal.

The doctor continued:

"You know, I was like all scientific men usually are. I believed only that which I could see, touch, hear, feel, or weigh. But gradually I began to see that, as Shakespeare says, 'There is more in heaven and earth, Horatio, than in all thy philosophy.' I discovered that there were forces which could not be weighed and measured, photographed and phonographed."

He twirled the globe in his hand, unconscious,2 and without realizing it, Myra became intent upon the flashing play of the lights from its reflecting foci.

"Yes, it was a sort of intellectual joke on me," he continued, smiling in reminiscence. "I came to laugh and remained, if not to pray, at least to marvel and to seek more knowledge. I had ridiculed the idea of haunted houses, of messages from the dead and the distant living. Yet, I learned that telepathy, or mind-mesaging, actually does exist, and is practiced by many people.

"The little coincidences, when we suddenly receive a letter from some absent friend about whom we have been thinking very intently, the meeting on the street in some unexpected place of some one else about whom our thoughts have been unduly busy—these things are not accidental, but the result of mental power."

"But, Dr. Alden, how can one mind communicate with another—it seems so ridiculous?" asked Myra, intently watching the crystal globe.

"Twenty years ago, Miss Maynard, we would have thought the idea of a wireless telegraph instrument a ridiculous phantasy of dreams. Yet, see what a tremendous part wireless messages now take in history, for peace and war, in shipwrecks, battles and trade.

"Yes, and more wonderful still is the wireless telephone—the projection of the voice to distant parts with a few small instruments made in a workshop by virtually ignorant men from the blueprint patterns of the inventors. Now, if what a man can make may do such wondrous things, think how much more delicate is the brain instrument which God and nature have developed. How reasonable to suppose that this wonderful mind instrument should be able to radiate the ether even more powerfully than the crude pieces of metal, wires, batteries and electric currents. Why, the great force which gives life to us all is the same which controls these messages and the other forms of the occult—it is the force of the lightning's flash, the blazing glory which fires the sun and the flame which burns in the life essence of the plant seed. It is——"

Myra Maynard's face was drawn and ashen; at first he imagined that she had returned to her immediate trance of the hour before.

Then he realized that he had been twisting the crystal, inducing a mechanical hypnotic state. He leaned forward, gazing into the girl's eyes.

"What do you see?"

She shuddered, and then to his amazement placed her hands and thumbs into the position of the Devil worshippers' symbol. The girl whispered, in word which were barely audible to the physician. "He is looking at me * * * oh, his eyes burn and freeze me * * * and his

Suddenly she gave vent to a suppressed scream and covered her face with her hands.

The spell was broken, and Myra turned her dilated eyes toward the anxious face of Alden.

"What was it? What was it, Miss Maynard?" he begged as she looked around in subjective fright.

"I can't remember! I saw a man * * * and such a queer man * * * that is all I recolect."

"Who was it? Did you ever see him before?"

"No" and she could not resist her sense of humor, as she laughed, albeit a bit wryly, "and I never want to see him again!"

More than this she could not describe, and Alden, fearing that he would strain the girl too much by further efforts, proposed that they take a walk, or even a little exercise.

"You are apt to have some unusual experiences tonight,' he suggested, "and it is well to free your mind of this morbid business for a while."

"Splendid!" cried Myra, enthusiastically. "How would you like to make a round of our golf course—the club is just down the street, and I am quite sure that I could beat Colonel Bogey today!"

Alden took the suggestion eagerly. Before half an hour had passed the oddly met pair were enjoying the clear air and the sun on the links, having dismissed for the time being all thoughts of black and white magic.

But other were not so forgetful!

CHAPTER XII.

The Bloom of Doom.

LATE that afternoon a wagon drew up before the Maynard home. Arthur Varney who had dropped in for a call, was cooling his heels impatiently, as Mrs. Maynard poured some tea.

"Myra, I am sure, will be back in a few minutes. She is playing golf with Dr. Alden," said the mother.

"Mrs. Maynard," and Varney's voice was in deadly earnest, "I do not trust this man. It seems so queer that you allow him such a freedom in your home—when you have known him only a few days."

Myra's mother looked at him anxiously.

"Arthur, I have made inquiries into his connections. He's very well connected socially. He presented some letters of introduction from mutual friends to-day. He knows a great many of our acquaintances. I hope I have not made a mistake. He saved Myra from suicide last night. And I feel confident that he means us no harm. Do you agree with me?"

Varney shook his head ominously.

"I do not. His mission has some ulterior motive. Myra is young, innocent and impressionable. She possesses an enormous fortune and I believe that this man is trying to gain control of her feelings by practicing this mysterious power of hypnotism which you say he exercised today. Beware of him!"

There came the sound of voices from the door.

"Keep out of here, I tell you!" cried the butler. Mrs. Maynard and Varney walked curiously toward the hall, and beheld two men holding flower pots, in stiff argument with the faithful Willis.

"We wants ter sell some of our flowers to the missus!" argued one of the men as Willis tried vainly to shut the door.

"I wish no flowers," exclaimed Mrs. Maynard, but Arthur Varney smiled ingenuously.

"A good idea. Myra regretted the faded plant which she kept in her bedroom. I'll buy another one. Let me see your plants, my good fellow," he interjected.

"Sure, guv'nor, an' swell posies they is!" cried the foremost one, as Willis stepped aside in disgust.

Varney and Mrs. Maynard stepped to the doorway.

"Which one would you pick for her, Mrs. Maynard? I want to surprise her, you know, it is her birthday, and a little remembrance of flowers will be even pleasanter than the books I brought."

Mrs. Maynard, flattered at the appeal to her good taste, looked over the collection. Only one of the potted plants appeared of any value.

"Well, it is a small choice—what is the name of that flower? I have never seen it before?" she queried.

"Sure, lady, that's one of them Great White Way posies, I reckon. I don't know the Dago name for it—but it's sure some fancy moniker. The boss calls it a 'Night Blooming Laliole,' or somethin' like that!"

"What do you charge for it?" asked Varney, drawing out a roll of bills.

"This is ten beans, guv'nor, fer it's one of them classy flowers that don't get up until sunset! Is it a bargain?"

Varney laughed, and tossed the money to him.

"Give it to Willis—he'll take it upstairs, and put it in Myra's room as a surprise." He turned away, and Mrs. Maynard followed him into the house.

"You are so thoughtful, Arthur," she murmured.

"Not at all, not at all. I have my mind on Myra always," he said, "and I can't resist doing any little thing which means additional pleasure in her life. But I do wish that she and that miserable quack would come back from the golf links."

His wish was soon answered, as Myra danced joyously into the hallway, her eyes sparkling and the roses of a perfect physique on her cheeks. After a few polite words, Alden went out, leaving Varney to study the girl's indescribable indifference to the magnetic charm which he had formerly exercised without resistance.

There was some new element in her life which he could neither overcome nor fathom.

* * * * * *

That night, after Dr. Payson Alden had returned with a small hand-satchel, he was shown to a guest room.

He asked a curious favor, before retiring.

Myra had told him of the beautiful plant, covered with unopened blossoms, which Varney had sent to her room, in place of the one which had died.

"Let me have that plant in my bedroom just for tonight," Alden begged. "It may seem foolish, but humor me."

Myra jestingly agreed, and after bidding him "pleasant dreams," she retired. She slipped downstairs a few minutes later, on some un explainable impulse, to obtain the glass crystal which she carried to her own room.

She sat there, for perhaps an hour, engrossed in those sweet, secret meditations which moonlight invariably conjures into the mind of a maiden. It was a glorious night outside, and with the electric lights switched off, she sat on a divan near the window, looking curiously at the mysterious glass globe which had given her such curious visions.

Dr. Alden was restless, but eventually sank to troubled dreams.

Then a surprising thing happened.

The plant, standing on his dressing table near the bed, began to open its white waxen petals. He had carefully examined it—taking the roots out of the pot, prodding the earth, and at last arriving at the conclusion that nothing was wrong with it.

But as the flower spread, a few grains of powder dropped from the calyx to the damp earth of the pot. A thin white vaper arose, as the powder was absorbed.

Pungent fumes seemed to spread through the room with surprising rapidity, and the doctor turned uncomfortably in his sleep.

Then he began to cough, clutching at his throat as though some beast were gnawing at it.

Myra, with the glint of the moonlight on the crystal, suddenly beheld a new vision in the translucent depths. It was the face of Dr. Alden, struggling and moaning! The girl sprang to her feet. So vivid was the impression, that she tiptoed down the hallway to the bedroom of the visitor.

Listening for an instant she heard a low moan:

Then she detected a frightful, biting odor, and she forced open the door. The noxious gases almost overcame her, but coughing and stumbling over the floor, she reached the window, to force it up. The fresh air rushed in, driving out the poison vapors.

The electric light which she suddenly turned on disclosed the figure of the doctor, twitching in unconscious agony. Myra dashed water in his face and bathed his forehead with it until he opened his eyes.

As he blinked and rubbed his throbbing head, he smiled his gratitude.

"Turn about is fair play! I saved you and now you repay the debt with interest!"

She shook her head, and pointed to the plant.

"It must have been that," she said. "Let us throw it out of the window!"

"No, I have examined it. This is just another little trick of the occult evildoers. We have been more than a match for them this time. I wonder what will happen next?"

As he spoke Myra pointed excitedly at the picture which hung over his bed.

"Did you see that swing? Did you see the face upon it just then?" she demanded, in frightened tones.

"No, not a thing," replied the doctor. "But, I have no doubt at all that you did. Who was it?"

"The same horrible face of the man with his thumbs like this!"

Payden Alden scowled. This tremendous psychic struggle was gaining in intensity every hour!

(To Be Continued Next Sunday.)

Madman Tries to Kidnap Girl; Whips Three Men

CHARDON, Ohio, April 30.—Charge of assault and battery was made against Blaine Redding, thirty-two, after his arrest, when, it is alleged, he tried a few nights ago to carry away Miss Ethel Springer, seventeen, from her home in Fullertown.

Later the charge was withdrawn and he was adjudged to be insane. He was arrested only after having thrashed three men who tried to hold him. He was taken in charge by a deputy sheriff at his boarding house when kneeling in prayer.

"I will marry Ethel Springer, no matter what happens," said Redding as he left later in custody of Sheriff Ballard and Deputy Rhodes for the Newburg State hospital after being adjudged as insane.

Hunted for 42 Years Can't Find Wife to Suit

BRIDGEPORT, Conn., April 30.—Joseph Cronin, a farmer of Derby, announced that he had searched forty-two States and two countries of Europe, and that while in a receptive mood, he had not found a girl suitable to be his spouse.

"I am strictly temperate, a healthy and strong farmer, and I have been searching sixteen years for the right kind of a wife," he declared. "I have yet to find the woman, and I wish the newspapers would help me."

JEAN ELIOT TELLS NEWS OF CAPITAL

Items of Interest and Importance of Past, Present, and Future.

(Continued from Sixth Page.)

matic Association of George Washington University will present "Disraeli" at the Belasco Theater.

"Beauty Is Only Skin Deep" is being produced under the direction of Mrs. L. W. Busbey, and has the cleverest cast: Mabel Grandin, who is to "play the lead;" Mrs. William P. Borland, Elizabeth Bryan, Mrs. William Chase, Frances Carpenter, Mrs. Max Kauffmann, Dr. Anna Ketcham, and Dorothy Bauer.

Miss Larner Business Manager.

Margaret Larner is business manager. The play is given to provide a Smith alumnae scholarship, to enable some clever girl who could not otherwise afford it to achieve a college education.

Frances Carpenter is to have the part of a manicure, and has spent the past week making an exhaustive study of coiffures, in the hope of finding something outrageous enough to suit the part.

—+—

"Disraeli" would seem to be a most ambitious undertaking for a college dramatic association.

But young Mr. Gluck, who is to play George Arliss' famous role, has real dramatic ability. And there are eighteen enthusiastic workers in the cast, who are all talented. Inez Ryan is to be the Russian spy.

Rehearsals Every Evening.

Rehearsals are being held every evening, and the students of the university are doing everything in their power to help make the entertainment a success. There's a thrilling list of patronesses.

—+—

Another pleasant event on the calendar is the concert to be given at the Raleigh, at 8:15 o'clock on Tuesday evening, by the combined musical clubs of Johns Hopkins University. They have been making a tour of other cities, being received with great enthusiasm, and their success here is assured, particularly as the entertainment is to be given under the patronage of the board of lady managers of the Episcopal Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital.

There, now, haven't I made you want to take in these good things that are in store for us. And don't you think I'd make a good press agent?

Prove that you do by coming down and going with me. Fondly yours,

JEAN ELIOT.

WRIGHT ON HAND FOR TENNIS EVENT

Bull and Peel, Titleholders, Expected Here Shortly for Workouts.

Irving C. Wright, finalist in the recent Palm Beach, Fla., winter tourney, and one of the ranking players last year, joined R. L. James and Harold Throckmorton today to make ready for his matches in the Chevy Chase Club tournament now in progress. C. M. Bull, jr., and Theodore R. Pell, title holders in the doubles are expected shortly to tune up for their matches in the challenge round.

The annual invitation tournament holds more cracks this season than ever before, and the process of weeding out begun yesterday will continue tomorrow at 10 o'clock unless a change is made. Matches contemplated at 10 yesterday were late in getting off as business engagements held many out of competition.

There were several defaults, some of the out-of-town entrants finding it impossible to get down for their engagements. Good headway was made, some of the matches getting to the third round. One or two matches in the consolation event will be started today.

Play in the men's singles will continue all day tomorrow, the event for women and the mixed doubles and men's doubles getting under way as soon as can be arranged.

Decidedly the best match of yesterday's play in the ninth annual invitation tennis tournament of the Chevy Chase Club was that between J. Upshur Moorhead and Harold A. Throckmorton, national interscholastic champion. The match went the full three sets to an 8—6 finish, Throckmorton finally winning out. A large gallery witnessed the exhibition.

Moorehead is credited with putting up one of the best games of his career.

Throckmorton, while only a youngster, ranks No. 12 in the N. L. T. A. ratings. He plays to beautiful form in all departments of the game, and is master of an exceptionally bewildering service. The second ball, following a fast initial shot, is a strong slice, bounding five or six feet in the air. It was this serve that was responsible for Moorhead's downfall, the local man finding it as much as he could do to return it at all—stroking it being at most times out of the question.

R. L. James, of Saratoga, N. Y., survived two matches. After easily disposing of Armstrong, 6—2, 6—1, he defeated George Lewis in straight sets, 6—3, 7—5. Jones used a string chop stroke with great percision.

Douglas Hillyer failed to play to his best form, going down before Ballard Moore, 6—3, 6—2.

Connie Doyle easily disposed of C. Garland, dropping but one game in the match.

H. C. Breck has two matches to his credit, coming through both without the necessity of extending himself at all. He defeated Sam Herrick, of the Washington Country Club, 6—1, 6—4, and T. P. Feckman, 6—1, 6—2. Breck is considered to have a good chance of surviving to the finals. Play will be resumed Monday morning.

The summaries:

First round—G. D. Parkes defeated W. Davis by default; G. L. Lewis defeated R. L. Palmer by default; R. L. James defeated H. C. Armstrong, 6—2, 6—1; J. T. Grayes, jr., defeated F. H. Davis, 6—1, 6—1; J. Karrick defeated H. S. Voshell by default; A. J. Gore defeated Coleman by default; C. B. Doyle defeated C. Garland, 6—1, 6—1.

Second round—H. C. Breck defeated S. Herrick, 6—1, 6—4; T. P. Peckham defeated R. L. Raggs by default; H. F. Selden defeated A. Wylie, 6—0, 6—1; Ezra Gould defeated C. M. Wood, 6—0 6—2. J. Ballard Moore defeated Douglas Hillyer, 6—3 6—2; R. L. James defeated G. L. Lewis, 6—3, 7—5; A. J. Gore defeated J. Karrick, 6—2, 6—2; J. N. Meade defeated F. C. Baggs by default; Gould Lincoln defeated J. H. McLean, 6—3, 6—1; H. E. Cotton defeated A. Y. Leech, jr., 6—3 6—1; H. A. Throckmorton defeated J. Upshur Moorhead, 2—6, 6—2, 8—6.

Third round—H. C. Breck defeated T. P. Peckham, 6—1, 6—2; J. N. Meade defeated Gould Lincoln, 5—7, 6—4 6—2.

THE STRANGE CASE OF MARY PAGE

By Frederick Lewis, author of "What Happened to Mary." Pictures by Essanay.

CHAPTER [illegible]

Confession.

WITH his hands clasped behind his back and his brows bent in a frown that made him look oddly old and tired, Langdon paced slowly up and down. Over and over in his mind he went back through the testimony of the long trial of Mary Page. He was confident now, as he had not been confident in the beginning, that she had not shot David Pollock in a frenzy of delirious fear.

But who had killed him?

That was the problem!

Never in all his experience had he remembered so baffling a case.

At least a half dozen times he had felt that his fingers were at last upon the right thread that would lead out of the maze, but each time his edifice of hope had crumbled.

The doorman at the Hotel Republic had repeated only what the chauffeur had already told—that Shale had left Pollock as soon as he got out of the machine, but even so, Langdon had sent Brennan and his conferees to scour the town for him.

He ought not to be hard to find; but, once found, could he tell anything?

That was the question.

And so, wearily and endlessly, Langdon paced the stone-paved room, doubly ugly in the clear light of the early morning.

Suddenly he was halted in his self-imposed sentry duty by the sound of a knock on the door, and in response to his "Come in," Daniels entered.

"I looked for you over at the office," he said, "but they told me you were here."

"Did you want me for anything special?" asked Langdon coldly, and the theatrical man flushed.

"Yes," he said, "I did. I had a long talk with my wife last night, and she and I decided that the hoodoo on the Covington is too black for us, anyway. No good can come out of that place for me, and she—she said, she wanted me to come down here and ask you to put me on the stand again. Do you understand what I mean?"

"I think I do," said Langdon quietly, though a flame had leaped into his eyes. "You want to tell what you didn't say before?"

He was too clever to let this man know how jubilant he was.

"Yes," said Daniels. "It may not be important, yet somehow I know it is. It's—it's about what I heard when I passed the door of the gray suite that night."

"Thank God!" cried Langdon, and drew his chair close to that of Daniels.

When they entered the court room together an hour later every trace of anxiety and suffering had been wiped from Langdon's face.

He looked buoyantly young, and when he passed Mary, he whispered something to her that brought a light to her eyes, too, and though there was surprise there was no fear on her face when she herself was called as the first witness of the day.

"Miss Page," said Langdon in the vibrantly happy voice of one who sees success just ahead, "on the night when you went into the gray suite from the banquet room were you wearing or carrying your cloak?"

"I slipped it on as I came into the hall. I carried my gloves and my evening bag."

"Did you see Mr. Pollock the minute you entered the room?"

"No."

"What did you do?"

"I slipped off the cloak again because it was warm and laid it on a chair with my gloves and bag."

"Where was that chair?"

The question snapped like a whip lash, and for a moment Mary hesitated.

"I'm not quite sure," she said slowly; then, with more assurance: "Why, yes, I am! It was toward the door into the other room because it was then that I saw Mr. Pollock come out."

"And you retreated?"

"Yes." The answer was breathed rather than spoken, but Langdon pushed on, too eager to spare her.

"Did he come toward you?"

"Yes."

"Did he follow you so far that he came between you and that chair?"

"Why, of course. He—he—came right up to me."

She shuddered and hid her face in her hands, as the tide of recollection swept over her, but Langdon had only one more question.

"Then in order to secure the revolver from your bag, you would have had to push past him and secure the bag from under your cloak, would you not?"

"Yes. But I—I—don't remember what happened."

"That is all, thank you, Miss Page," said Langdon, and turning to the bailiff he added briskly:

"Call Mr. Daniels."

A sense of something big impending stirred the spectators and the jury alike, and the judge himself, keenly alive to that new note in Langdon's voice, turned deliberately in his chair as Daniels began his testimony.

Everyone in the room leaned forward, tense with excitement.

"Mr. Daniels," began Langdon with no preliminaries, "on the night of the banquet you walked with Miss Page past the door of the gray suite, did you not?"

"I did."

"Did you know that Mr. Pollock was in there?"

"No. But as I passed I heard his voice."

"Could you hear what he said?"

"Yes."

"What was it?"

Langdon was firing his questions like shell from a gun.

"He said 'Let's understand each other once and for all on this thing. I've got you and got you good. I can send you up tomorrow if I want to. You've no more chance than a snowball in h—.'"

"Did any one answer him?"

"Yes. A man said 'You'll make that threat once too often Dave Pollock. I'll make you eat your words at the point of a gun some day.'

"Then I heard Dave laugh contemptuously and I had to walk on toward the banquet."

"Did you know whom that other voice belonged to?"

"I thought I did. That's why I left the banquet room and came back to listen at the door. I was startled when I heard Miss Page's voice instead of the one I expected."

"Whose voice did you think it was?"

"That of a man named Shale. 'Dave's jackal' we used to call him."

"Mr. Daniels do you know of any reason why Mr. Pollock should threaten to send this man Shale 'up?'"

"Well, Pollock told me once that he had 'got the goods' on Shale for some shady work that would easily send him to prison, and that he kept him out of jail because he was useful."

"Mr. Daniels, have you seen Mr. Shale since the death of Mr. Pollock?"

"Yes, I have."

"When?"

"The—the—day before I came back home, I ran into him on the street. We had a talk, and he told me that he thought he could get me fresh backing for The Covington."

"Did he see you again?"

"Yes. A few days ago he came to me and told me that a syndicate had been formed and had raised the money to put on a musical comedy, and that I was to be manager of the theater and look after the financial interests of the syndicate. He was very nice to me."

"Mr. Daniels," Langdon's voice became suddenly grave and freighted with meaning, "did Shale know you had heard his voice in that hotel room?"

"Yes. I asked him if he had been there."

"What did he say?"

"He said I couldn't testify to what I wasn't sure of, and that it was wiser not to ask too many questions."

"Did you understand that the backing for your theater was in order to keep you from testifying?"

"I object!" cried the district attorney, on his feet in an instant.

There was much wrangling as to whether this question could be admitted; but the judge finally ruled that it was material evidence.

"It was never put into words, Mr. Langdon, though I gathered it," the witness said. "But there are some bigger things than business success, and I wanted to set this straight."

A sudden commotion arose at the back of the room, and as the spectators turned and stared, and the judge's gavel rapped for order, a man's voice rose shrill and exasperated.

"So that's what you've got me here for, is it? Daniels has snitched. Well, he can't prove anything—I tell you he don't know nothin'!"

A pallid-faced man in a light checked suit was struggling in the grip of Brennan and a policeman, who drew him steadily down through the gaping crowds as Langdon called his next witness.

"George Shale."

"I won't testify!" stormed the newcomer, twisting angrily under the by no means light handling of the detectives. "What do you want of me?"

"I shall tell you that when you are on the stand," said Langdon briefly, and his honor, leaning forward, said sharply:

"A refusal to testify is contempt of court. You can be sent to prison for that."

For a moment Shale stared wildly about, then his eyes narrowed shrewdly, and he said gruffly, "all right," and allowed himself to be led up into the stand.

The excitement of the spectators can be imagined.

Here was drama of the most thrilling kind—an unwilling witness in a sensational murder trial, dragged to the stand, forced to open his sealed lips and tell what he knew.

"Mr. Shale," cried Langdon, "what had David Pollock asked you to do for him on the night when he was shot?"

"He asked me to get him the gray suite at the Republic. He wanted to get Miss Page in there for a quiet chat—so he said."

"Did you do it?"

"Yes. But I was kind of sore, because a man gets tired playin' errand boy for a guy that's dead crazy about a skirt."

"What were you doing on the fire-escape?"

The question came so sharply that it held the whole room tense with its unexpectedness; but Shale did not wince.

"Dave told me to get out there, and keep an eye out for anybody likely to butt in. He knew you could reach the different rooms by it."

"Isn't it true that you and David Pollock quarreled that night?"

Shade blanched.

"Yes, it's true," he said hoarsely. "Dave was a devil when he was drunk."

His face was beaded with perspiration and his hand gripped the edge of the witness stand till the knuckles showed lividly.

He tried to look angry, but he succeeded only in being tragically ridiculous.

Suddenly Langdon softened his voice. "Where were you when Miss Page came into the room?"

"On the fire-escape, standing flattened against the wall, so that anybody looking at the steps wouldn't see me."

"Why did you re-enter the room?"

Shale moistened his dry lips, then with a gust of defiance flung up his head.

"I went in because Dave called me," he said loudly. "The girl had gone hysterical. She was laughin' and shriekin', and he calls to me. 'For God's sake, Shale, see if she's got any smellin' salts, or anything in that line.'"

"And when you opened that bag you found a revolver, didn't you?" Langdon's voice rang out triumphantly. "George Shale, what did you do with that revolver?"

For a moment the man swayed as he stood, then he laughed and flung his hands wide.

"I shot him with it!" he shrieked. "I shot him! I didn't intend to do it, but he was a dirty dog. He had threatened me again that very night. He struck me—he called me his jackal—and when I saw the gun—I knew my chance had come. I took it out and walked around and said, 'Here's your smelling salts—and when he turned to take it I shot him. Oh, my God——"

He broke off with a storm of gasping sobs.

Everyone in the room was on his feet. Even the judge had risen.

Mary herself was standing swaying like some lovely lily, the light of a wondrous joy shining in her eyes, while her lips murmured over and over, "Philip—Philip—Philip!"

Then, high above the turmoil rose the voice of the district attorney.

"George Shale, you are hereby declared under arrest, to be held to await the action of the grand jury!"

Again pandemonium broke out but fell to silence when Mary, her eyes drenched with happy tears, cried softly:

"What's to become of me now?"

"Your Honor," Langdon's voice was exultantly happy, and his hand caught and clung to Mary's, "Your honor, the defendant desires to know what is to become of her?"

"She is discharged," answered his honor with a smile, and made no effort to stem the cheers that rose, filling the room and echoing far down the corridors proclaiming to the world at large that Mary Page was free!

Still more cheering throngs greeted her when she merged from the prison a little later with Philip and her mother beside her, and they followed the speeding motor for blocks shouting their acclamations and congratulations, while Mary nestled contentedly against Philip.

Forgotten were the days of horror following the death of Pollock and her arrest for a crime she knew nothing of, forgotten even were the unpleasant moments when Pollock pursued her with manifestations of his unwelcome love. It was the most wonderful moment of her life.

"And you never suspected?" she said at last, and Philip shook his head.

"Not Shale," he said. "I was looking for someone else."

"Now don't talk any more about it," said Mrs. Page quietly. "Tomorrow, Mary, I am going to take you back to the country, and keep you until you have put this dreadful thing out of your mind forever."

"And then," said Mary wistfully, "I will come back and take up my work."

Langdon tightened his arm about her.

"And then," said he, "you will come back and marry me. A fee is always paid a lawyer for services rendered. I ask the biggest one in the world. Mary—will you pay it?"

And what her low-voiced reply was not even her mother knew.

(The End.)

Suffrage Press Agent Leaves for Chicago

Preparatory to the national convention of the Woman Voters' party in Chicago, in June, Mrs. Hortense McDonald, national press chairman of the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage, left Washington yesterday for the Windy City, which will be headquarters for publicity until after the convention. Offices already have been established there, and a corps of workers are employed making preparations for the convention.

Mrs. McDonald, who keeps in close personal touch with all the activities of the various branches of the union, plans to keep telegraph operators in Chicago busy sending out suffrage bulletins for the next few weeks.

This is the first time in the history of the Union that the press department has been separated from headquarters here. The move is only a temporary one, it was stated at union headquarters today, and when the Chicago convention is over Washington will be headquarters as before.

How Nuxated Iron Helped Me To Whip Frank Moran

Jess Willard Tells Secret of His Easy Victory. Also reveals hitherto untold secret of his great triumph over Jack Johnson; Says

IRON IS GREATEST OF ALL STRENGTH BUILDERS

Ordinary Nuxated Iron will often increase the strength and endurance of delicate, nervous folks 200 per cent. in two weeks' time

I consider that plenty of iron in my blood is the secret of my great strength, power and endurance.

Jess Willard

SPECIAL NOTE—Dr. E. Sauer, a well known physician who has studied widely in both this country and Europe, has been specially employed to make a thorough investigation into the real secret of the great strength, power and endurance of Jess Willard, and the marvelous value of nuxated iron as a strength builder.

NEW YORK—Upon being interviewed at his apartment in the Colonial Hotel, Mr. Willard said: "Yes, I have a chemist with me to study the value of different foods and products as to their power to produce great strength and endurance, both of which are so necessary in the prize ring. On his recommendation I have often taken nuxated iron and I have particularly advocated the free use of iron by all those who wish to obtain great physical and mental power. Without it I am sure that I should never have been able to whip Jack Johnson so completely and easily as I did, and while training for my bout with Frank Moran, I regularly took nuxated iron, and I am certain that it was a most important factor in my winning so easily." Continuing, Dr. Sauer said, "Mr. Willard's case is only one of hundreds which I could cite from my own personal experience which proves conclusively the astonishing power of nuxated iron to restore strength and vitality even in most complicated chronic conditions."

Not long ago a man came to me who was nearly half a century old, and asked me to give him a preliminary examination for life insurance. I was astonished to find him with the blood pressure of a boy of 20 and as full of vigor, vim and vitality as a young man; in fact a young man he really was, notwithstanding his age. The secret he said was taking iron—nuxated iron had filled him with renewed life. At 30 he was in bad health; at 46 careworn and nearly all in. Now at 50 a miracle of vitality and his face beaming with the buoyancy of youth. As I have said a hundred times over, iron is the greatest of all strength builders. If people would only throw away patent medicines and nauseous concoctions and take simple nuxated iron, I am convinced that the lives of thousands of persons might be saved, who now die every year from pneumonia, grippe, consumption, kidney, liver and heart trouble, etc. The real and true cause which started their diseases was nothing more nor less than a weakened condition brought on by lack of iron in the blood. Iron is absolutely necessary to enable your blood to change food into living tissue. Without it, no matter how much or what you eat, your food merely passes through you without doing you any good. You don't get the strength out of it, and as a consequence you become weak, pale and sickly looking just like a plant trying to grow in a soil deficient in iron. If you are not strong or well you owe it to yourself to make the following test: See how long you can work or how far you can walk without becoming tired. Next take two five-grain tablets of ordinary nuxated iron three times per day after meals for two weeks. Then test your strength again and see for yourself how much you have gained. I have seen dozens of nervous run-down people who were ailing all the while, double their strength and endurance and entirely got rid of all symptoms of dyspepsia, liver and other troubles in from ten to fourteen days' time simply by taking iron in the proper form. And this after they had in some cases been doctoring for months without obtaining any benefit. But don't take the old forms of reduced iron, iron acetate or tincture of iron simply to save a few cents. You must take iron in a form that can be easily absorbed and assimilated like nuxated iron if you want it to do you any good, otherwise it may prove worse than useless.

Many an athlete or prize fighter has won the day simply because he knew the secret of great strength and endurance and filled his blood with iron before he went into the affray, while many another has gone to inglorious defeat simply for the lack of iron.—E. Sauer, M. D.

NOTE—Nuxated Iron, recommended above by Dr. Sauer is not a patent medicine nor secret remedy, but one which is well known to druggists and whose iron constituents are widely prescribed by eminent physicians everywhere. Unlike the older inorganic iron products, it is easily assimilated, does not injure the teeth, make them black, nor upset the stomach; on the contrary, it is a most potent remedy, in nearly all forms of indigestion, as well as for nervous, run-down conditions. The manufacturers have such great confidence in Nuxated Iron that they offer to forfeit $100.00 to any charitable institution if they cannot take any man or woman under 60 who lacks iron and increase their strength 200 per cent, or over in four weeks' time, provided they have no serious organic trouble. They also offer to refund your money if it does not at least double your strength and endurance in ten days' time. It is dispensed in this city by Jas. O'Donnell's drug store, People's Drug Store, and all other druggists.—Advt.

DON'T USE COCOANUT OIL ON YOUR HAIR

Or Anything That Must Be Washed Off

The scalp is not like other skin on the body that can be thoroughly cleansed with soap and water. The scalp contains a hair germ that must be treated with respect.

All soaps and everything that foams contains alkali and alkali dries up the scalp. Don't use them. Dandruff comes from too dry a scalp. The most sensible way to treat your hair is to thoroughly brush it once a day to keep it clean. Then use Speiser's Scalp Tonic after brushing to give your scalp that life and health which produce glossy hair. Speiser's Scalp Tonic corrects any abnormal condition of the scalp, kills dandruff, and relieves itchy and irritated skins. But even Speiser's Scalp Tonic cannot do the best work against the persistent use of soaps, perfumed oils, cocoanut oil, and patented concoctions that must be washed out of the hair to make your head presentable in public. Speiser's Scalp Tonic is for sale only at O'Donnell's Drug Store at 50 cents and is absolutely guaranteed by them in every respect.—Advt.

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The Mysteries of Myra An Inspiring Novel and Motion Picture Drama

Written by Hereward Carrington.

Dramatized by Charles W. Goddard.

(Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.)

Dr. Payson Alden, a physician, who has spent several years studying the occult, discovers that a band of devil worshipers are plotting to cause the death of Myra Maynard, an heiress, in order that her inheritance may fall to them. He has endeavored to warn her mother of the danger, but Mrs. Maynard, who still remembers the mysterious interest of her dead husband in the occult, and the curious suicides of her two older daughters on their eighteenth birthday, will not listen to his pleading.

Dr. Alden virtually burglarizes the Maynard residence, in order to learn of the mysterious sleep-walking of Myra. She is about to stab herself in a secret chamber of the house, obedient to the psychic commands of the Black Magicians, when he intervenes. Arthur Varney, a wealthy clubman, who is in love with Myra, is a member of the secret order. Struggling between his fear of the Black Master and his affection for the girl, he yields to the commands of his superior, and connives in the presentation of a flower for Myra's bed chamber, which blooms only at night.

Under the suggestion of the doctor Myra receives a warning from the spirit world to beware of the machinations of an unknown influence, but the interference of her mother interrupts the seance in which the girl, who is a natural "medium," has reached out into the unknown. Through the mysteries of crystal gazing, taught by the physician, she has become aware of a few facts concerning the mysterious band of devil worshipers.

Dr. Alden comes to the residence to remain on guard during the crucial night, and he is prompted by a curious premonition to ask that the flower bought by her suitor be placed in his bedroom. During the evening, after he has gone to sleep, its petals open, dropping upon the damp earth of the pot a powder which generates a deadly vapor. Myra's crystal gazing warns her of her guardian's danger and she saves him from death by a narrow margin.

CHAPTER XIII.

A Black Order Initiation.

THE forebodings of Payson Alden, psychic detective, were only too well founded!

For the baiting of luckless Myra Maynard by the scoundrels of the demoniac occult had only begun. The battle was now on in bitter earnest.

Even as the physician and the girl whom he was guarding slept through the bright hours of the early spring morning the machinations of the Black Magicians were at work.

All was silent within the dismal shades of the secret grotto of the Black Order, save for the incoherent incantations of a lone worshiper before the center altar.

This man, garbed in the black gown of the ritual, swayed to and fro, as he sat cross-kneed near the flickering tapers of a grotesque candelabra placed upon the floor before the fane.

On his knees was a tattered book, its pages of ancient parchment scrawled finely with cabalistic words of some Oriental language. The fitful rays of the candle cast a weird half-light upon these writings; yet, he seemed to glance only occasionally at them, as though he were refrshing his memory on some familiar teachings.

His left hand traced queer symbols in the heavy air, dank with the odor of incense, as he murmured the ritual in a droning monotone.

For an hour these solitary studies continued. At last he seemed satisfied with the results. He arose and folded the book.

He walked noiselessly to the wall behind the altar, where a concealed spring swung open a small compartment door. Within this he placed the volume as reverently as one would a great treasure.

Just then came three knocks from the direction of the iron-barred lodge portal behind him.

Two answering knocks he gave, and then cautiously opened a tiny slit in the door. A murmur of subdued passwords ensued. A grimy hand appeared, proffering a large white envelope.

The lodge-keeper accepted this with a grunt of surprise, and scrutinized the address after he had clanged the small opening which shut out the dim light from the outer passage.

Inside the white envelope, which he feverishly tore open, was a black one addressed simply in white ink:

"THE MASTER."

He hurried toward the velvet-draped doorway of the inner shrine to grope for an instant in the darkness within.

A dim, red glow from no apparent source of luminosity became apparent, revealing the face of the Master, cheeks resting upon clenched hands, thumbs upturned—the symbol of the devil-worshipers. The celebrant answered the sign after making a profound obeisance.

"Why are my meditations disturbed?" rasped the voice of the evil pontiff.

"A black message, Master," and the envelope was handed to him, not without a trembling of the speaker's fingers.

The leader of the black cult leered menacingly and opened the missive. Its message was written in white upon black paper:

> Your plan did not work and he is beginning to suspect the order.
> Faithfully, VARNEY.

The Master's quizzical face twisted into a momentary spasm of fury, and the seared lines about the vulture mouth deepened in the baleful crimson light.

Then he laughed scornfully, crushing the message in his bony fingers as he dropped it into a pit-like opening by his side, from which dull red flames were rising.

A puff of smoke rose mysteriously, and he waved his hand toward the messenger, with a token of dismissal.

"Go! Prepare for the work which is to come."

The man prostrated himself, as the light dimmed, and retreated gropingly through the hangings into the outer chamber.

There was a warning series of knocks upon the outer door. He hurried to answer it, and after the usual interchange of signals he swung it back upon its creaking hinges.

Eleven black-robed figures entered, leading a man, barefooted and naked to the waist except for a black hood which completely covered his head.

The neophyte, for such he evidently was, staggered weakly, leaning for support more than once upon the arms of his two custodians on either side.

His feet were bleeding, his chest cut and bruised, and his heavy breathing, at times almost groans, indicated that he had been through some fearful physical ordeal.

One of the members poured additional incense on the tripod and a cloud of pungent smoke arose. The new-comer coughed under the blinding hood, but there seemed no hesitation through fear or anguish as he steadfastly followed the leader of the ceremonies to kneel before the altar.

As he waited there, in a posture of adoration directed by the leader of the ceremonies, the others knelt before the revolving disc, upon which were limned the cabalistic signs of the order.

Back and forth they swayed, chanting in unison.

At last their ritual seemed to be complete for the final step.

Three resonant crashes came from the brazen gong within the master's sanctum.

"Rise and follow; fear nothing!" muttered the leader.

The candidate staggered stiffly to his feet and advanced calmly, directed by the tuz upon a rope about his waist. Through the curtains he passed to the brooding silence of the unholy of holies!

Slowly at first the spectral head of the Evil One appeared above the altar, as a hand from the darkness suddenly snatched the black cap from the newcomer's head.

He blinked in the sudden light and obediently dropped to his knees. His eyes turned toward the horned face of the illumination, yet there was no trace of astonishment upon his impassive features.

Kneeling there he was a curious figure in these more than curious surroundings. Even in the dull blue light from the satanic image he was evidently darker in complexion than the others, some of whom had removed their black masks in the rear of the room.

He was a Hindoo, as the clear profile, straight nose and delicate lips proved. His round cheekbones, the large, lustrous eyes were strangely out of harmony with the predominant evil of the Black Order, for here was a face in which goodness, benignity, courage shone forth unmistakably.

A new vision attracted his attention from the diabolic face. It was that of the Master, in the symbolic posture, over a red brazier, becoming visible as the bloody hue permeated the chamber.

The tones of the Master were sepulchral as he asked:

"Do you swear to give your body and soul to me and to those above me," and his voice sank to a whisper, "in this life and the others to come?"

The Hindoo nodded calmly and murmured:

"Yes, I swear it."

The bony left hand of the Master rose high in air to make the sign known as the "devil's benediction."

The Hindoo bowed his head and then gazed upward, fascinated by the curious way in which the hand was silhouetted against a disc of reddish luminosity above the pontiff's head. Its lines seemed at first to blur—then strangely enough took on the outline of the horned head of the evil one.

Silently the Master dropped his hand and resumed the pose with thumbs upturned against his cheeks, as the light faded out about him.

A hand upon the Hindoo's bare shoulder drew him to his feet, and he weakly followed through the dark portal into the larger room. Again he knelt before the altar, drinking some hideous liquid from a human skull, proffered by the master of the ceremonies.

Hoods now removed, the other twelve members each in turn gave him the secret handclasp of the order, and whispered, one after the other, a syllable of the phrase which formed the master password of the Black Order.

The new initiate studied each face with earnest scrutiny, as he answered in kind the signal of the devil-worshipers. As he was led through the barred portal the others were chanting in the thickening smoke of the malodorous incense.

And the last words he heard as the door clanged behind him were:

"Death and torture in this life to him who fails! Death and torture in the lives to come, more fearful than the soul can know, more dreadful than the soul can endure!"

Chapter XIV

The Astral Body.

AFTERNOON tea time again found Arthur Varney calling upon Myra Maynard. But his efforts to regain his diminishing hold upon the girl's sympathy were short-lived for Dr. Alden appeared upon the scene before half an hour had elapsed.

The warmth of Myra's greeting, the flush in her face and the sparkle in her eye—unseen by the physician, but jealously observed by the other man—brought a steely glitter to Varney's covert glance.

Myra's mother had artlessly prattled of the doctor's narrow escape from choking, the night before.

"It must have been some deadly flower although the doctor says it was a harmless plant," observed Myra.

"Probably the doctor is in poor health," put in Varney. "He is spending too much time in this ridiculous occult stuff, which is all imagination. The man is apt to lose his mind—if he hasn't already done so."

But the arrival of the physician put an end to Varney's further animadversions.

Myra, however, was piqued.

"Dr. Alden, my friend Arthur will not believe what I tell him about the visions I have seen. He says that the occult is all nonsense, and that I am just letting my imagination play silly tricks with me. Perhaps you can convince him how deadly serious it all is!"

Alden smiled cypically. There was no afection wasted between the two men. The physician was vainly endeavoring to analyze the other's motives, and an instinctive distrust drew a barrier between them.

"Well, I have no ulterior motive in convincing Mr. Varney. There are none so blind as those who do not wish to use their sight; I am not an occulist, merely a physician interested in natural phenomena. Even what most people regard as the supernatural I have already learned to be as natural, as material, indeed, as the things we see about us—the working of the telegraph, the telephone, the growth of the flowers, the painting of the sun's rays upon the photographic plate."

His pride had been touched, however, and he addressed Varney even more than Myra and her mother as he continued.

"Science has demonstrated many things which in former times were ridiculed. We have proved in hospitals and medical schools that people may be hypnotized—that there is an extra, or subconscious, mind which is busy during the hypnotic sleep. Instructions given during a trance to be followed out after waking are obeyed to the letter. That same subconscious mind is the one which enables many people to awaken without an alarm clock at some definite time desired. The subconscious mind never sleeps. The outside, or objective mind, forgets, but the inner one never!"

"All bosh!" jeered Varney. "I only believe what I can see!"

"Did you ever see the current in an electric wire?" responded Alden. "When famous professors and doctors have investigated the work of mediums and found certain demonstrations absolutely occurring, despite all their caution and skepticism, there must be something in it."

Alden leaned forward excitedly.

"I myself have been in an ordinary room, and have seen a real hand and arm materialized out of the thin air! I have seen objects carried across the room with no visible means of lifting. I have seen tables 'walk' across floors and tilt themselves on edge, when the psychic or medium was not touching them! All this, mind you, happened in clear light, with many witnesses present. And just as that inner mind knows, remembers, plans, and creates things which the simpler, mater-of-fact bread and butter mind cannot do, so that same mind can project itself in the astral."

Mrs. Maynard's face began to twitch nervously. She interposed almost irritably:

"Dr. Alden, I cannot listen to this ridiculous nonsense any longer. You are poisoning Myra's mind."

"The bread and butter mind appeals more to me," added Varney. "Which reminds me that I would appreciate some more marmalade on my tea biscuit."

"All right, you will see," stoutly declared Payson Alden. "The mysterious forces of the mind are beyond our understanding, but I know what I have seen. I have received messages——"

He was interrupted by the tinkling of the telephone bel. Varney, sitting nearest the library table, gave a perceptible start. He picked up the receiver to reply.

"Hello * * * yes! Just a minute!" and he squinted at Dr. Alden with a vague suggestion of perplexity which the physician could not divine. "Here, it is some one to talk to you. One of your messages from the ghosts, Doctor."

Alden walked to the instrument to reply. He noticed the lull in the conversation and the expression on Arthur Varney's face as the scoffer seemed to strain his ears to catch the faint sound of the message on the receiver. And Varney did not fail to notice the manner in which Alden pressed the instrument tightly against his ear to preclude the escape of any of the words!

AGAIN ALDEN COMES TO THE RESCUE.

"Hello, is that you, Dr. Alden? Give the word."

It was a curious request.

But the physician smiled and answered quietly: "Psycho."

Varney cast a suspicious glance at the doctor's calm face, a hundred conjectures flashing through his mind.

The voice continued, with a note of pride in its ringing tones.

"I have succeeded beyond my expectations. I have been initiated, and now I know their pass-word, signs, and other secrets. I will see you soon."

A smile came into the doctor's eyes; he was about to speak enthusiastically, and then he hesitated, with an unguarded look at Varney.

"Very good. Fine!" he replied, hanging up the receiver without the formality of a farewell.

As he turned to address the others Varney cudgeled his brain to identify that familar voice. Impulsively he blurted out: "Who was that, Dr. Alden?"

"Just a friend," was the cool response.

But a freezing suspicion was gradually asserting itself behin dthe other man's mask of sangfroid. Looking at his watch, he made an excuse to leave the house for an important appointment. Alden breathed a sigh of relief when he had left. The instinctive feeling of antagonism had been getting upon the physician's nerves in spite of the studied courtesy of the other.

Alden was still curious about the eerie chamber in which Myra had come so nearly death.

"I'd like to make a little examination there," he explained, "while you are getting rested up a bit. It will not take long."

Myra and her mother ascended to the upper floor, where the girl was given a nervous lecture by her mother, and urged to forswear all future dabbling with the unknown dangers.

Alden had been provided with a small lighted candle by the maid. He lost no time in descending the secret stairway to the deserted chamber.

He made a careful examination of the ancient black altar, running his fingers over its dull panels. Suddenly his search was rewarded; the wood slid back, exposing a small compartment, into which the physician peered eagerly. As he pressed it, a small drawer flew open; Alden drew from it a roll of parchment. The doctor held it up to the flickering light, and was astounded to see the name of Myra's father. It was the diploma of membership in the Black Order! Here was conclusive proof of the connecting link between the unfortunate girl and this evil band.

Payson Alden sprang to his feet. In his excitement he overturned the candlestick.

The chamber was inky dark as he endeavored to find the light once more. At this juncture the butler, on the floor above, peered into the ill-fated doorway of the secret stairs with apprehension. He heard no sound, and perceiving all dark, assumed that the doctor had left the place. With a sigh of relief he shut the panel, automatically locking it from the outside.

Unwitting of his imprisonment, the physicial relit the candle. As he looked at the stone floor of the room he was startled to see the imprint of a naked human foot in the dust. He was certain that it had not been there a moment before!

He whipped out his revolver.

But there was apparently no one near, or within the room. He now observed other footprints. As he stepped forward to examine them closely, the light of the candle was snuffed out!

There was no draught in the room; he knew that. Suddenly, without warning, a clammy hand gripped at his throat. He was forced back against the wall.

Then a phosphorescent glow began to form by his side, as the hold relaxed. It took on the vague form of human being, the features being barely distinguishable. The face was strange to the doctor, rooted to the spot in silence, with an uncontrollable tingling at the roots of his hair. This fright of the supernatural was now to the investigator!

The spirit spoke, in a rolling, sibilant tone, resembling more than a human voice the booming of the surf on a rocky headland during a great gale.

"I am the spirit of Myra's father; bid her beware of the Black Order which seeks her destruction!"

The glow disappeared, and Alden pinched his perspiration-dripping brow to make sure that he was awake! He rushed up the stairway, to find the panel closed securely. He pounded upon it; but no one came. Finally, in despair, he wrote a note upon a card, shoving it through the tiny crack at the bottom. He waited many minutes with no result.

Myra was extremely nervous, as she searched over the house for him. The maid added to her uneasiness by a startled scream.

"Oh, Miss Myra! Look what I found the kitten playing with!" she exclaimed as she brought the girl the white card.

It took but a minute to liberate the physician, now, and the girl was eager for an explanation. He shook his head, as he regarded anxiously.

"I will tell you some other time. I have made a terrible discovery, and you must be very brave, for your own sake. Now, I wish you would come over to my laboratory, where all my instruments are. I want to make an experiment which the last few minutes have proved to me more than ever is essential for our success."

Myra's face beamed with interest.

"I'd just love to do it. Willis said you had left the house, after looking through the panel to see no one there. I'm so glad you are safe. Mother has been lecturing me about this matter, and I know she doesn't approve. But we both owe it to you to give you a further chance. I simply must learn more!"

Mrs. Maynard's face reflected only deeper distrust, but she was prevailed upon to accompany them. The family automobile soon brought them to Alden's residence.

Within the sanctum of his psychic laboratory he was compelled to explain the various instruments, almost before they had removed their wraps. Myra was delighted as a child in a toy-shop; yet, beneath her enthusiasm burned a deeper intensity which reassured the doctor.

"What is this queer wheel, with the mirrors and funny lighting arrangement?" demanded the eager Myra.

"That is a mechanical hypnotizer," Alden explained. "It is a wonderful instrument. But come over here and let me show you something very simple—and complex—at the same time! It is a little instrument by which you can see the color of a soul."

Crossing the room to a cabinet he fumbled in the drawer, as Myra followed him. Mrs. Maynard noticeably shuddered and clasped her hands tensely.

"Gracious! What gave me such a start then. I felt that old feeling which my mother used to say meant that a goose walked over my grave!" she ejaculated. "I want to get out of this creepy room, Myra."

"Perhaps you got a little message from the unseen yourself, Mrs. Maynard," laughed the doctor, as he drew out two small glass slides from a tiny wooden case. "You know, many people do get the messages, but because their bread-and-butter minds won't listen to the inner mind, they never understand."

Perhaps Mrs. Maynard did, indeed!

But just at that instant another black envelope was presented to the master of the devil-worshipers.

In nervous white letters its message ran:

> "Master: There is a traitor among us. He telephoned to Alden. I know that voice, but can't remember which one of us it is.
> "Faithfully VARNEY."

The black paper was crumpled and dropped into the glowing brazier by the human claw of the evil leader, but this time his vicious features did not break into such a self-confident leer. He called to the master of ceremonies and spoke in more than the usual raucous tones: "Bid the brothers wear their masks today and let no pains be discussed within the meeting!"

Back in the rooms of the physician Myra was studying with interest the two glass slides which Alden had taken toward the light.

"These two slides constitute an 'auroscope.' By looking through them you may see the human aura," explained the doctor. "They are in reality tiny, air-tight glass boxes which contain a chemical known as disyanin. I will show you now to use them."

He led the way into a smaller room, along one wall of which hung a dull black canopy.

"Now, Mrs. Maynard, you stand up there and your daughter will take a look at your soul!"

But Mrs. Maynard was reluctant.

"I don't believe any of this silly stuff, and I don't want any experiments performed with me. I don't wanty my soul on exhibition!"

The good lady was consistently inconsistent.

Myra dimpled as she cried: "Why, mother—I trust you are not afraid of a guilty conscience. Very well, then; you look at by aura!"

"Stand over against the curtain," directed Alden. She obeyed. "Now, Mrs. Maynard, look first through the window at the bright light with this red slide, covering both your eyes. Take a long look, and get lots of light through your eyes. Then, when I pull down the window shade, turn toward Miss Maynard, and look at her through the other blue one, covering your eyes evenly with the little glass screen as you did at the window."

Mrs. Maynard hesitated and then feminine curiosity won the victory.

She followed his instructions to the letter, and then dropped her hand in disgust.

"I told you it was all imagination. I see nothing!" she exclaimed triumphantly.

"Here, let me try it," was the unruffled reply. "It's all in knowing how."

Alden took a long look through the first slide, and then turned toward Myra, covering his eyes with the second one.

"Will you please pull down the shade?"

Mrs. Maynard acquiesced. Alden stood there for half a minute without comment. Gradually a luminous glow appeared about the figure of the girl, extending about twelve inches on either side of her, and as far above her head. It was almost egg-shaped, with the larger end above her forehead.

Alden gave an exclamation of satisfaction.

"Come here, Mrs. Maynard!" he cried. "Now look, while I hold the glass!"

This time the skeptical lady was surprised. The spirit glow was unmistakably there!

"Wonderful!" she exclaimed. "I wonder if I can see my own aura?"

The physician laughed and amiably turned toward the window, as he drew up the shade.

"You'd better try. Maybe you will clear up some great psychic mystery. Here is the auroscope."

He handed her the two glasses, and as she peered, owl-like, at the sky, then at her own hands, and feet, Alden beckoned quietly to the girl.

"You have the aura of a wonderful psychic. You know, every person has a different aura, or soul envelope, and each one indicates the nature and mental, even spiritual characteristics. Would you like to try another experiment? I wonder if I can release your astral body from the material?"

"Yes, yes!"

While Mrs. Maynard was lorgnetting herself in a cheval glass through the dicyanin slides, Alden led the girl to a comfortable chair.

He directed her to look steadily at him. A few passes with her receptive sympathy sufficed to put her into a hypnotic trance. Mrs. Maynard was too engrossed to observe them.

"Stand up!" directed the doctor, softly.

The sleeping girl obeyed.

Alden directed her to hold out her right hand. Again she followed the instruction. He began to move his hands above her arm, as though he were trying to draw something from it.

It seemed slow, at first; but with an intensity of concentration which flushed and then whitened his face, causing the beads of cold perspiration to stand out on his forehead, he persisted.

At last some vague white shadow seemed to emerge from the girl's wrist!

It seemed nothing more tangible than a ray of light, at first. But with his manipulations, none of which touched her flesh, gradually it took the semblance of her own hand!

It projected from her arm, a few inches above the rigid flesh and blood hand.

"I have succeeded!" muttered the doctor triumphantly. His eyes flashed, and he drew still harder with his hypnotic strength.

But suddenly the shadowy replica vanished!

Alden relaxed with a nervous jerk of his muscles like one who hears an unexpected thunderbolt.

Mrs. Maynard was peering at herself through the auroscope before the mirror.

"Look, look Isn't it wonderful? I can see it!" she cried in ecstasy.

Myra's eyes fluttered and the look of wonderment in their azure depths changed to a smile, as she turned to watch her mother.

Alden had gently shoved the girl back into her sitting position again, and now she exchanged a droll glance of commiseration with him.

"Poor, dear mamma! She is quite impossible in some things, isn't she?" she murmured. "But, please go on, Dr. Alden. I was conscious of another hand leaving my body, and yet I saw you and saw myself sitting here—even with my eyes tightly closed."

Alden looked nervously and doubtfully at Mrs. Maynard, who was having a truly enjoyable time.

"Mother, you mustn't interrupt our experiments," pleaded Myra, gently.

"Oh, my dear, excuse me. But I have such tremendous success," replied Mrs. Maynard, with enthusiasm. "I believe that I have powers which I never suspected!"

"Have you discovered your soul, dear?" asked the girl, mischievously.

"I feel quite sure that I have."

"And is it a fashionable color?"

Mrs. Maynard peered thoughtfully through the auroscope.

"It seems to be Alice blue, with a tinge of ashes of rose pink," she ventured, slowly.

"That proves that you have a wonderful imagination," commented Alden. "Keep on, Mrs. Maynard, you are on the right track."

Mrs. Maynard did not sense the irony, but she kept on.

Alden beckoned to the doorway of his laboratory.

Myra followed.

"Let's try the hypnotizing machine. Your mother will have a little soul trip, personally conducted, to the end of the rainbow, and we won't be disturbed in here."

Alden led Myra to a chair in front of the big hypnotizing machine—such as is used for experimental work and psychotherapeutic treatment in up-to-date hospitals.

This curious instrument consisted of a great black wheel, placed in front of a lusterless black canopy. It was about seven feet in diameter and placed around its rim were a series of mirrors, about a foot apart, between which were steel rods radiating from the center. Alden's deft manipulation of a little central crank caused the apparatus to tilt forward on its axis. Myra regarded it with awe, yet there was an expression of absolute trust in the girl's sweet face which thrilled, and almost frightened, Payson Alden.

How often had he wished for such sympathy, such co-operation, in the years of lonely psychic investigation which had caused the ridicule of his friends!

And his long-time worship of the girl from afar, all unknown to her, had been so curiously rewarded with this sudden, delightful intimacy of mutual effort!

It seemed too delightful for reality!

A vague apprehension that he might pay too dearly, or worse, make her pay too dearly, in suffering and danger, for the privilege, crossed his mind.

But Alden was not a moral coward; his only fear was for the happiness of this bud of young womanhood. Her fearless determination to solve the mystery of her sisters' murders and their mutual quest for justice on the criminals reassured him.

"We will fight it out, even though the path be beset with ten thousand occult perils, he thought. "White magic must prevail."

CHAPTER XV.

A Journey Into the Unseen.

NOW, Miss Myra we will try the most interesting experiment in the whole psychic world. That is the astral journey. Your hand was projected from your body before. Your aura shows that you are unusually gifted in occult strength. Have no fear."

The girl shook her head demurely.

"Why should I have, with you to direct?"

Alden flushed, although the darkened room prevented the girl from observing his mental confusion.

"You know there is only one danger in projecting the astral body, and that is that the astral 'thread,' as it is called be snapped. I must be frank and tell you this," he continued, "for when we know dangers we understand what to avoid. Your subconscious mind will remember what I say. It will be the inner mind which will guide you if your astral does emerge from the physical."

"And where shall I go?"

"I do not know. Your mind, your soul alone will determine that. For it knows, all the time, just what it is doing. When the astral leaves the physical body your soul is freed from the flesh which remains behind and which I will see. The only connection is the tiny spirit chord which knits the two together. When that is broken it means death!

The girl shuddered, although ever so slight; then she laughed aside her premonition.

"Well, Doctor, I shall not take any embroidery scissors along, and there shall not be any danger of my snipping the thread. I won't climb fences or do any other tom-boy tricks that might cause trouble. But, hurry, for I am eager——"

Even as she spoke Alden had touched an electric switch which caused the wheel to revolve very slowly.

Another connection turned on hidden lights, which caused facets of light to flash from the circle of mirrors.

Myra looked up at the whirring glasses, which gradually increased in speed and luminosity as Alden skillfully manipulated his mechanism. The girl grew rigid and sank back recumbently in the chair.

Payson Alden studied her face with the tense anxiety of a surgeon performing a dangerous operation.

The blood seemde to leave her face, and the muscles to turn to ice, as the effect of the automatic control increased.

Slowly Alden stepped between the quiet figure and the whirring wheel. Then he repeated the pulling gestures which had resulted in the projection of the hand before.

It seemed hours to him that he struggled, and apparently there was no result.

Yet, unseen by the physicial envelope of the young girl, and stood beside the unconscious body.

Alden still tugged sporadically with the tense gestures, and he turned the revolving wheel to its highest speed.

Even as the spirit form extended a warning hand to him, it seemed to be drawn, like so much smoke through a ventilator fan, directly into the black center of the spinning wheel.

Where it had gone, how it had gone, Alden could not tell!

But that it had gone he knew before many minutes.

For Mrs. Maynard had knocked anxiously at the closed door of the laboratory.

"What is the matter with Myra?" she cried excitedly. "Her face is as pale as snow! Oh, doctor, you must not do this! It is a wicked thing to play with life and death and the soul this way!"

Alden nervously stoped the machine.

He realized that Mrs. Maynard had at last awekened to the verities of the psychic—no longer could she disbelieve.

"Miss Myra, wake up!" he cried, dominantly.

But there was no answer.

He repeated the earlier passes of hypnotical control, but the girl remained as though lifeless.

The mother sank to her knees beside the rigid figure, caressing and chafing her wrists and hands.

"Myra, Myra! Wake up child!" she wailed, the tears streaming down her face.

But a stone image could have given no more response than the flesh and blood before her.

Alden anxiously pinched her skin, and applied a half dozen other tests. There was no nervous reaction whatever.

He ran to his desk for his stethoscope.

"Her heart is all right. She is breathing very lightly, so faintly that you

(Continued on Page Sixteen.)

Iron Is Greatest of All Strength Builders, Says Doctor

A Secret of the Great Endurance and Power of Athletes

Ordinary Nuxated Iron Will Make Delicate, Nervous, Rundown People 200 Per cent. Stronger in Two Weeks' Time in Many Cases.

NEW YORK, N. Y.—Most people foolishly seem to think they are going to get renewed health and strength from some stimulating medicine, secret nostrum, or narcotic drug, said Dr. Sauer, a well-known specialist, who has studied widely, both in this country and Europe, when, as a matter of fact, real and true strength can only come from the food you eat. But people often fail to get the strength out of their food because they haven't enough iron in their blood to enable it to change food into living matter. From their weakened, nervous condition they know something is wrong, but they can't tell what, so they generally commence doctoring for stomach, liver, or kidney trouble, or symptoms of some other ailment caused by the lack of iron in the blood. This thing may go on for years, while the patient suffers untold agony. If you are not strong or well, you owe it to yourself to make the following test: See how long you can work or how far you can walk without becoming tired. Next take two five-grain tablets of ordinary nuxated iron three times per day after meals for two weeks. Then test your strength again and see for yourself how much you have gained. I have seen dozens of nervous, run-down people who were ailing all the while double their strength and endurance and entirely get rid of all symptoms of dyspepsia, liver, and other troubles in from ten to fourteen days' time simply by taking iron in the proper form. And this after they had in some cases been doctoring for months without obtaining any benefit. But don't take the old forms of reduced iron, iron acetate or tincture of iron simply to save a few cents. You must take iron in a form that can be easily absorbed and assimilated like nuxated iron if you want it to do you any good, otherwise it may prove worse than useless. Many an athlete or prize-fighter has won the day simply because he knew the secret of great strength and endurance and filled his blood with iron before he went into the affray, while many another has gone down to inglorious defeat simply for the lack of iron.

NOTE—Nuxated Iron recommended above by Dr. Sauer is not a patent medicine nor secret remedy, but one which is well known to druggists and whose iron constituents is widely prescribed by eminent physicians everywhere. Unlike the older inorganic iron products, it is easily assimilated, does not injure the teeth, make them black, nor upset the stomach; on the contrary, it is a most potent remedy, in nearly all forms of indigestion, as well as for nervous, run-down conditions. The Manufacturers have such great confidence in Nuxated Iron that they offer to forfeit $100.00 to any charitable institution if they cannot take any man or woman under 60 who lacks iron and increase their strength 200 per cent or over in four weeks' time, provided they have no serious organic trouble. They also offer to refund your money if it does not at least double your strength and endurance in ten days' time. It is dispensed in this city by James O'Donnell's Drug Stores, People's Drug Store, and all other druggists.—Advt.

Short Man Can Be Hero In Movies and on Stage

Walthall in 'Birth of Nation' Definitely Dispels Dread of Actor Folk.

FAME CROWNS HIS EFFORTS

First Dug Ditch as Italian Laborer—Climaxed Work as "Little Colonel"

Some fifty thousand Washingtonians have been added to the most of people who have investigated the matter and are willing to state that a man short in stature can so visualize their idea of a hero that they lose all sense of height values except as they relate to the artistry of perfect performance.

The eternal question of the theater whether a short man can be a hero—a question that has kept some wonderful actors and still more wonderful singers off the stage in times past—has been definitely settled by Henry B. Walthall—the young man whom critics agreed was easily the best artist among all the actors in motion pictures, long before Walthall became famous as the "little colonel" of "The Birth of the Nation."

For more than five years it has been difficult for even the most blase critic of the drama—and this includes dramatics with the most highbrow tendencies—to discuss the work of Henry Walthall in motion picture productions soberly.

A young man, a student, and such a consummate artist, they all considered him far beyond the average of motion picture stars, and critics feared they would be accused of extravagance in placing on paper their estimates of this young man's work.

In Boston, in New York, in newspapers and magazines devoted to discussion of the dramatic from purely literary or artistic viewpoints, Walthall's work has always been given the most careful consideration and the highest praise.

Climax of Fame.

It is through "The Birth of the Nation" that Walthall's work has become known to those theatergoers who are not familiar with other motion pictures. He has made the most decided impression on them and many inquiries are received at the theater and by the dramatic editor of The Times as to just who he is.

Walthall is an actor with a considerable stage experience behind him. While he has never lived in Washington, many intimate friends of the late United States Senator Walthall of Mississippi, will remember him as a very small boy visiting his uncle, Senator Walthall, during the latter's last term of office.

The actor branch of the Walthall family lived in Birmingham, Ala., where Henry B. was born. He was graduated from the high schools of his city and was completing a college course when war with Spain was declared. He immediately entered the volunteeers and served throughout the war, although he did not get nearer to the front than Tampa, Fla.

Walthall always had been interested in the stage and in the drama as an art. He had taken part in theatricals at school and at college, and decided to go on the stage after the war.

He went to New York from the place of his discharge and began at the bottom as an extra man with a stock company. The fact that he was a real artist was soon discovered by his stage director, but his small stature was against his being selected for very important parts.

As a juvenile and especially in the parts of very young men, Walthall made a reputation among theatrical folk that led to his being given important parts in important productions.

Aided by Henry Miller.

Henry Miller is credited with giving Walthall his best chance on the stage, and it was while supporting Miller in "The Great Divide" that Walthall's attention was turned to motion pictures.

He was in New York at the time, and was persuaded by a friend who was then playing in motion pictures to go to the old Biograph studio and watch a rehearsal.

David W. Griffith saw the quiet, reserved young man watching the production of the play with much more interest than was usual in visitors, and asking questions about the methods adopted that showed his interest.

Griffith and Walthall discussed the drama and the place of motion pictures in the drama. The discussion became so interesting to both men that Griffith finally persuaded Walthall to try the pictures, simply as an experiment to convince him what could be done. The men recognized in each other the big vision and broad outlook on the art in which they were both so deeply interested.

Walthall's first appearance in motion pictures was as an Italian laborer. In those days it was not easy to get people to agree to let motion picture actors utilize their dwellings or workshops for picture plays as it is now.

Griffith wanted to produce this picture with as much realism as possible. He made an agreement with a contractor who had undertaken to dig a trench, to dig part of the trench for him if he would permit the photographer to use it for a film play.

The contractor agreed and Walthall was put to work digging in the trench. The scene was to be a short one, but Griffith kept him at it. When his back seemed about to break and big blisters appeared on both hands, Walthall asked Griffith if he hadn't almost enough film.

Had to Make Good.

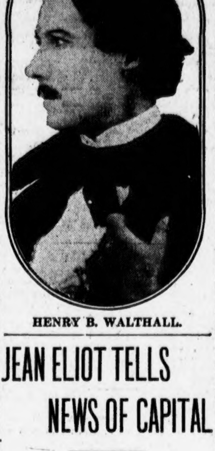
"I got all the film I wanted an hour ago," the director replied, "but I promised the contractor you'd dig about a yard more of trench for him than you've done, so please hurry up and finish it!"

The Italian laborer flashed on the screen was the best piece of dramatic work that had been done up to that time either by Griffith or by Walthall. The artistry of the real actor came out on the screen as it had not been able to show on the stage. It convinced Walthall and Griffith that each had found something real.

Since then Walthall has been continuously in picture work. He was one of Mary Pickford's leading men; he played opposite Dorothy Bernard, Florence Lawrence, Florence Turner, and went with Griffith to the Reliance Company, where he and Griffith produced what they had both long wanted to do—a series of plays based on Poe's poems.

When the cast for "The Birth of a Nation" was made up nobody but Walthall was considered for the part of Col. Ben Cameron. In that part he has accomplished more for the acting art in motion pictures than anyone has ever done.

The triumph of the great spectacle is considered a joint victory for Griffith and Walthall, and with dramatic critics and students of the drama his work in this one part—to say nothing of others he has enacted—will give him a permanent place in the hall of fame of the American drama.



HENRY B. WALTHALL.

JEAN ELIOT TELLS NEWS OF CAPITAL

Items of Interest and Importance of Past, Present, and Future.

(Continued from Sixth Page.)

duty to test the flying machines the Government is sending into Mexico, and is stopping at the Army and Navy Club. Between times he is either flying about to parties or is kept busy refusing invitations, for everyone seems anxious to show him a good time.

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Summer Plans Being Formed.

Wherever spring may lead the young man's fancy, it leads his elders to serious consideration of their summer plans. To them May means migration, and the question that everybody asks everybody these days is "Where are you going this year?"

It's a question that's particularly momentous to official folk, who may be kept in town late by the business of statecraft. So it will be the Vice President and Mrs. Marshall, who have no vacation in sight; and obviously the Secretary of War and Mrs. Baker, who expect to move into "In the Woods" early in June, are counting on staying right on here most of the summer.

Now would it appear that most of the other Cabinet families are planning any extended vacation. The Lansings go, if they can, to their happy hunting ground on Lake Ontario. The McAdoos are likely to settle not far from Shady Lawn, the summer White House in New Jersey. The Daniels, as a rule, do not migrate. They arrange all sorts of little junkets aboard the Dolphin, with maybe a visit of a week or two to the seaside resort in North Carolina where they have gone in summer since the boys were babies.

The Lansings by the way are spending the week-end at Annapolis as the guests of the Superintendent of the Naval Academy, Capt. Edward W. Eberle, and Mrs. Eberle.

Mrs. Gregory Plans to Return to Monterey.

The Gregorys—at least Mrs. Gregory and the children—expect to go back to Monterey, which they found very pleasant last summer, where the Attorney General joins them whenever he can.

Mrs. Gregory is just back from a visit to her mother, Mrs. Naile, at her home in Texas, where all her brothers and sisters were gathered for the first family reunion since they were all married and drifted away from the home nest. She is so enthusiastic about her visit, and although she's glad to be home, she hated to leave Texas.

The Houstons have found nothing that they like better than the Massachusetts coast, and will return to Woods Hole, where they have spent several summers. The Burlesons are still without plans, other than that they will be late in town; likewise the Redfields and the Lanes. Secretary and Mrs. Lane and Nancy, who have been with Mr. and Mrs. Adolph Caspar Miller on a short trip up the James river, are expected back this afternoon.

The Secretary of Labor and Mrs. Wilson and their family are tremendously fond of their home in Blossburg, and always spend as much of the summer there as circumstances allow.

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Scores of Capital Beauties At Hop.

"I didn't know there were so many pretty girls in the world." This from the gentleman who was dealing out tickets to the flock of maidens on their way to Annapolis for the "Easter hop"—dear me, can it have been a week ago? Truly it seemed that half the pretty girls in town were on the car when we boarded it.

Now that spring has come, the lovely old city on the Severn is thronged with Washington girls over each week-end. In addition to the usual attractions, the hops—and the "middies"—there are now baseball, la crosse and other sports to be witnessed, not to mention the boat races and sailing parties.

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Rumors Proves Wrong As To Wichfeld House.

No, Mrs. Aksel Wichfeld has not leased her house for the spring months to the Arthur Graham Glassows, of Richmond, as I have heard rumored. I have made inquiries, and Mrs. Wichfeld expressed great surprise at the suggestion. She and Mr. Wichfeld expect to remain in town during the spring, and will probably go to Swiftmoore for most of the summer.

Frances Moore is, of course, in camp, where she numbers Francise Williams, Caroline Ogden-Jones, and Madeleine Slater among her tent mates.

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It was by way of being an inspiration to have the invitations for the marriage reception of May Power and Lieut. "Bill" Lightle read "from 4 to 6 o'clock;" for by that simple expedient the crowd which is the bane of an apartment wedding was avoided. The Powers, moreover, have an apartment with large sunshiny rooms which open up attractively, and on the day of the ceremony it was sweet with blossoms.

The drawing rooms had a proper canopy, and all the palms and floral arrangements which go to make a wedding complete; but the dinning room had an original touch in the graceful baskets of Mrs. Ward roses and lavender "laylocks," which formed a frieze about the plate rail. And the palms and branching ferns marched half way down the long apartment house hall to meet and welcome the guests.

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Marooned In England Visited By Her Son.

Mrs. Appoline Alexander Blair, who has been at her English home since before the war broke out, is rejoicing in a visit from her son, Percy Blair, who has been driving an ambulance at the French front. He is now on a month's leave.

Mrs. Blair writes that Elmleigh, her place at Canterbury, is lovely in its spring costume—but bewails the English climate which she declares is mostly weather.

It's cold and raw and damp and heating arrangements as we know them are almost unknown in rural England; but the right tight little island breeds a sturdy race with whom exercise is a religion and fresh air a mania.

—✣—

Fair Rookies Visit Chevy Chase Club.

Many of the fair rookies at the woman's preparedness camp spend their spare time at the Chevy Chase Club. It is tantalizingly near to the camp, and all this week the open tennis tournament has been an added attraction.

Every day between 5 and 6 o'clock groups of the girls are to be seen roaming about the clubhouse grounds in their khaki uniforms, followed by a throng of admirers, all asking a thousand questions about camp life.

Taking advantage of open week at the club, ever so many of the members have been giving bridge, luncheon, and tea parties. The lawn is literally covered daily with tables surorunded by groups of gayly dressed women, playing cards—and smoking, if you please. Mrs. Joe Leiter has had several tea parties on the portico, also Louise Hill, little Miss Bartlett, from the navy yard; Mrs. Clark Waggaman, Mrs. George Minnigerode, usually with Karl Minnigerode's wife, formerly Mary Montague; Alice Shepard, Mrs. B. H. Warner, jr., and Mrs. Walter Dunlop, with her cunning little daughter. Some of the others having tea one day were Mrs. James A. Woodruff, Mrs. Bobby Patterson, Pocahontas Butler, Dean Caldwell, Mrs. Arthur Foraker, Mrs. Ryan Devereux, Margaret Devereux, Ballard Moore, Fred Chapin, Dorothy Deeble, Louise Bayne, Frank Smoot, Mrs. John Edwards, Mrs. Gordon Jones, and Nancy, her daughter; Hughes Oliphant—but, dear me, I must get my letter in the mail. With much love, yours fondly,

JEAN ELIOT.

Sunday.

Colonial Dames Council Concludes Sessions

The National Council, Colonial Dames of America, yesterday concluded its annual session with the election of officers.

Those elected were: President, Mrs. Joseph Rucker Lamar, of Georgia, widow of the late associate justice of the United States Supreme Court; vice presidents Mrs. Nathaniel T. Bacon, Rhode Island; Mrs. Aleix L. Sofussat, Maryland; Mrs. Overton Lea, Tennessee; secretary, Mrs. Charles Miller, Delaware; treasurer, Mrs. Alexander J. Cassatt, of Pennsylvania; registrar, Mrs. Franklin B. Dexter, Connecticut, and historian, Miss Cornelia B. Williams, Illinois.

Yesterday afternoon the Colonial Dames were given a reception at the old National Museum by Dr. Charles D. Walcott, secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. Mrs. Walcott, Mrs. Julian James, and Mrs. Rose Goevernor Hoes received.

Unitarian Club Will Hear Reminiscences

C. B. Lockwood, an Ohio octogenarian, will give "reminiscences of a long life" at the open meeting of the Unitarian Club in All Souls Church Wednesday evening. Mr. Lockwood is eighty-seven years old and was an intimate of Emerson, Alcott, and Sanborn. He will refer in his address to his friendship with Emerson and Emersons philosophy of life. Secretary of War Baker has assured Grosvenor Dawe, president of the club, that he will introduce Mr. Lockwood if he is free from official duties that evening.

Purchase of Dog for Nickel Ruled Valid

LOS ANGELES, May 7.—Sorva, a Russian wolf hound, valued at $500, was actually sold for a buffalo nickel, was the decision of Judge Wellborn in a suit brought for the recovery of the dog by Miss Marjorie D. Cole, daughter of Harry Cole, local broker.

The suit was against Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Smith, who, according to the testimony, went to the Cole home and took the dog away with them after a dispute over other matters had arisen between them and Mrs. Cole, the mother of Marjorie. The court ruled that they must give the dog back or pay $500.

Griffith Film Boasts Marvelous Audiences

Within the first year of its existence the Griffith style of theatrical production as expressed in "The Birth of a Nation" played to more people in the producer's native country than any play ever produced in America has played to during its entire career, with the possible exception of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." The fact that the latter play is fifty-six years old, and is still a drawing card explains why it outstrips this newcomer in the field.

Tomorrow afternoon this attraction begins the fourth week of its engagement in this city at the National, and as the last two weeks of the run are now being announced it will have a record of five weeks to its credit, or sixty-odd performances, when the engagement closes May 20.

D. C. Mail Business Grows.

An increase of 22.67 per cent is shown in the report of the receipts for the Washington Postoffice for April, made public today. The total receipts for last month were $185,872.88.

THE MYSTERIES OF MYRA

An Inspiring Novel and Motion Picture Drama

Written by Hereward Carrington. (Copyright, 1916, by the Star Company. All Foreign Rights Reserved). Dramatized by Charles W. Goddard.

(Continued from Page Fourteen.)

can hardly detect it," he said, finally. "But there is nothing wrong."

"Nothing wrong! Why, doctor * * * you're murdering my child before my eyes!" screamed the anguished mother.

"Be calm, Mrs. Maynard. Your daughter' astral body has left us, and she is on some strange journey which will mean much to her," he answered, steadily.

"What do you mean?"

"I believe that she has sent her soul in search of the persons who are persecuting her. You know that she is the victim of a terrible conspiracy. You have lost two other daughters in the same way—perhaps your husband died at their hands."

His voice was resonant with mastery. He fairly thundered at her, as he added:

"Now, you must help me and help Miss Myra for her own sake. The time has come for us to face the truth without fear. Be quiet, until we get some sign from her."

Mrs. Maynard looked at him piteously, for the mother instinct was stronger than logic, more urgent than thoughts for the future. Yet there was the professional force in his command, the insistence of the physician, the earnestess, indeed, of a greater emotion than mere scientic interest. Her intuition told her that Payson Alden cared more for her daughter than even he would admit. And so she resigned herself to the inevitable, with a blind faith in his ability to save the situation. But nature was not to be denied. The shock of Myra's appearance, in its ghastly replica of the same fate which had overtaken the other two sisters at her age, the mental suffering which the family tragedies had kept continually in her mind combined to bring a snapping of the overtaxed nerves.

She fainted, and the physician ran to her side.

He placed her in another chair, and administered first aid, torn between conflicting emotions.

Had he been studying the face of his subject he might have noticed about this time a tremulous quivering of the muscles which indicated that the soul-journey was not all placid!

The Black Order, in which it seemed continual watchfulness was the rule of its evil genius, was in session. Obedient to instruction from their ruler, the celebrants were heavily hooded in the black masks. Only the two small eye-holes betrayed any expression of humanity in the sombre-garbed figures which sat motionless about the center disc. No man knew his neighbor, for there were more members than the thirteen who usually formed its meeting quota. The leader of ceremonies was refilling the tripod-fane with fresh incense. The pungent vapor arose in grotesque puffs and sinuous curves to the sooty ceiling.

Suddenly one of the group, with a grunt of mingled fright and amazement, nudged his nearest fellow, and pointed toward the smoke above the brazier.

The black cloud had become hazy gray in spots and had assumed a startling shape.

The figure of a young girl, with hands affrightedly clasped was discernible in the shadowy contours. Her appealing eyes were wide with amazement.

One by one the brethern of the unholy community drew attention to the strange phenomena. Used as they were to strange occurrences, still here was something which passed their understanding. And yet the ever-present fear of the Master's punishment stilled their tongues!

But one of them, the last of the circle to be appraised, sprang unsteadily to his feet.

He advanced toward the incense tripod, and drew back his black hood, the better to see the astonishing vision.

At first an exclamation of horror escaped his lips, and then he cried out stridently:

"By the left hand of Satan! It is Myra Maynard herself!"

His companions rose excitedly, as the apparition faded into the darker shades of the smoke.

He rushed toward the curtains to the inner chamber.

"Master! Master! I must speak to you!"

The angry voice replied from within: "Enter, Varney! But I forbade conversation, and I commanded all the brethern to wear their hoods!"

Arthur Varney, pressing his hand to his forehead, the victim of two oddly conflicting emotions, groped into the pitchy grotto. The Spectral Head shone malignantly at him, as its blue light fused with the red glow which gradually disclosed the features of the ruler.

"Master! She is here! We all saw Myra materialize in the incense smoke! What does it mean?"

A laugh of exhultation, more horrid than even his baleful tones of threatening, hissed through the evil potentate's lips.

"How did you see it?" he spoke, eagerly.

"She faded into the smoke; I could have sworn that it was her flesh and blood, and yet she disappeared once more!"

"It is her astral body, Varney! Hasten! Tell the brethern to recite the death mantra! Chant and will in unison to break the astral thread! We have victory in our grasp!"

Varney turned to obey; then his heart impulse asserted itself again.

"Oh, Master! Can she not be spared for me? I love her!" he begged.

"Fool! Do you not know that she can be yours for a thousand thousand of years after we have taken her soul away? Obey! You learned the penalty once before!"

Varney hesitated, and head drooping, he returned to his fellows. He repeated the command; "Chant and will in unison to break the astral thread!"

The ceremonial priest threw fresh incense into the tripod brazier and voluminous clouds of the smoke arose. At first the worshipers of the evil one choked with the density of the biting, pungent heaviness of the surcharged air.

Then, under the guldance of the leader, the chant was set forth, hissing the cabalistic phrase of occult death.

Each time the celebrants completed the black magic mantra "Om Pari Hum!" they raised their arms, and with a quick jerk pantomimed the gesture of breaking an invisible thread.

Their eyes were intent upon the rolling smoke clouds.

Gradually the form of the miserable girl materialized in the vapors, and her face evidenced a frightful struggle against the evil power which was engulfing her.

The astral form sank to the position of entreaty on bended knees. The piteous look, the pleading arms, the struggle for human existence racked the emotions of Varney; yet, his fear of the great captain of evil within the curtained portal, his avaricious trust in that promise of future reward kept him to his task.

"Mine for a thousand thousand of years!" he murmured, as his voice led the chorus of all the rest.

But unknown to any of the others one will was fighting them although the brown hands were weaving the same ominous gestures through the air.

The Oriental, his erstwhile calm features gnarled in a supreme contortion which echoed the spiritual battle within his soul, was fighting against the psychic momentum, that diabolical undertow of the thirteen other souls about him.

Within his chamber even the Master, bending now to the right and now left, in time with the rhythm of the celebrants without, was adding the power of his tremendous will to the murderous onslaught.

The Hindoo saw the girl sinking beneath the oppression of the outnumbering will; she was succumbing in this maddening maelstrom of devilish tyranny!

"She is a flower crushed beneath the feet of a multitude!" he thought, as he threw all the power of his trained mind, inured to concentration through years of esoteric study in the Far East. A bird among beasts of prey!"

But the astral figure was weakening.

The little hands now covered the dropping head as though to ward off the blows of the cruel assailants.

"She is lost!" muttered the Hindoo; in despair.

"We are triumphant!" exclaimed Varney, under his breath, as his dark eyes gleamed exultantly.

CHAPTER XVI.

Prayer When Science Fails.

DR. ALDEN had returned to the side of the silent body.

Mrs. Maynard, resuscitated, leaned over the white face, stroking the aureate locks tenderly.

"Look, doctor!" she exclaimed, almost in a shriek. "See the cold perspiration on her forehead—it is dripping wet. Oh, doctor, Myra is dying!"

She sank to her knees hopelessly.

Mother's instinct, the prompting of a thousand years in such a stress, asserted itself. Mrs. Maynard buried her face in her hands on Myra's lap as her lips moved in barely audible prayer.

"What can I do!" and Alden's lips trembled, for he too had lost faith in his ability to bring back the wandering spirit.

He looked about him in nervous frensy.

Then he too sank to his knees, to add his entreaties to the mother's.

Unwittingly they had cast against the spell of the devil worshipers the only antidote to that pervasive force: humility, faith, a concentration of white magic power more intense than even the powers of the spirits of evil.

Neither of them saw the fluttering of the eyelids nor the softening relaxation of the frigid face.

But Myra, as she returned to earthly vision, looked down upon the two figures—gently, not surprised—as though it were the most natural act in the world.

"Mother!" she breathed softly. "Mother, I've come back."

"Oh, thank God!" and her mother burst into happy tears. "Oh, my little girl, touch me, look at me, speak to me. Tell me once that you are safe!"

The girl laughed, weakly it is true, but with the old familiar ring in the silvery voice.

"I'm here, mother—but, oh, it was terrible! I'm so glad to be in your arms once more."

Alden mopped his forehead; his face broke into a smile, although a few seconds before he had felt as though he could never smile again.

He rose stiffly. He leaned for support against his cabinet, for he, too, had been fighting the great battle with a more tremendous outpouring of vital force than he had ever realized was his.

"Heaven be praised," he said earnestly. "We—thought—you—had—gone—forever."

The girl lifted her arms. Then she frowned.

"Oh, how they hurt!"

Alden hurried to his desk for some liniment. He rubbed and massaged the muscles with his inimitable skill as he smiled into her eyes reassuringly.

"They will be all right in a few minutes now. Don't worry about that. The astral came back this way first. You use your hands to express your emotions so much that they are more sensitive than any other part of your body. That is because you are a musician as well. Do you feel bad any place else?"

"Here," and Myra placed a hand over her heart a bit weakly. "I feel as though something had been tugging, tugging oh, to the breaking point!"

"What do you remember?" asked Alden apprehensively. "Perhaps that will explain it."

Myra closed her eyes reminiscently. She was silent for a minute or two as her mother and Alden bent over her anxiously.

"Can you recall it now?" urged the doctor.

"Nothing except—incense. Oh, such horrible incense! And men—men singing such a queer song; they were all in black. They waved their hands—and—Om Pari Hum! What on earth can that be?"

She looked up at him ludicrously.

Alden was puzzled and shook his head.

"Dr. Alden, Myra, must go home. She is delirious," insisted Mrs. Maynard.

Myra rose weakly from the chair, and then another memory came to her.

"Oh, yes! I saw this—"

She gave the first and thumb sign of the devil worshipers. Alden's pleasant face was drawn into a scowl of fury as he realized the significance of this.

He stormed about the laboratory. Myra and even her mother were surprised at the tempest of rage.

"It's that accursed Black Order. I'm going there now myself. I'll put an end to this," he cried, beating one palm with his clenched fist.

"But, Dr. Alden, don't you realize your danger?" pleaded Myra impetuously, a new and surprising light in her eyes, which Alden in his wrath did not notice.

"Myra, you must go home with me at once, child," interrupted her mother. Alden hurried to help her with her wraps. As he turned to assist Myra the girl's entreaties convinced him that her interest had deepened. His own hand trembled as he took hers to assure her that he was well able to guard himself.

"Don't be afraid, Miss Maynard. I will be very careful. I know the nature of this menace now—far better than you would imagine, indeed, far better than I did twenty-four hours ago. So don't worry. We have too much to fight for now, both you and I, for me to risk everything foolishly!"

The girl dropped her eyes and sighed as she spoke.

A great surge of feeling thrilled Payson Alden, as he realized that Fate seemed to be accomplishing more than his most ardent hopes could have done. His wrath was now under control, and as they looked into each other's eyes there was no need for further speech.

Mrs. Maynard realized that here, at least, was a practical demonstration of that telepathy whose existence she had previously ridiculed. Maternal prudence prompted intercession. She caught up Myra's cloak and threw it about the girl's shoulders.

Alden blinked, as though to waken himself from some unrealizable dream.

"Yes, yes—that's right," he stammered akwardly. "You must go home and rest. Do not let your mind dwell on these troublesome things until we can have another long talk. I will be able to explain a great many things then—for matters are not as hopeless, nor as elusive as they have seemed."

He followed them to the automobile and the lingering touch of the little hand in his own was a fragrant memory which lingered cheeringly through the bitter hours to come.

Once in his study again, his face grew icy in its sternness. He opened a desk drawer, lifted a revolver from it and smiled significantly at its menacing contour.

"Spirits is spirits," he muttered, "but a little lead poisoning is apt to prove very soothing to the most turbulent of them! I'll try a little bullet levitation, and I may surprise these assassins!"

He slipped the weapon into his hip pocket and hurried to his telephone.

The central operator seemed unusually dilatory. But at last a welcome voice responded.

"Ah, Professor Haji, I am glad to reach you. Can you hurry up to my residence? I have many important developments to recount."

There was a musical laugh at the other end of the wire as the Hindoo replied eagerly:

"Is she all right, Doctor? I know of much, yet I have feared for the return of the astral. You know, if it were drawn back too quickly it might derange the reason, or have a dangerous physiological effect. Once, when I projected myself——"

But Alden interrupted impatiently.

"She is splendid. She is a wonderful psychic herself, and the experiment was successful, after all. I have even convinced her mother of the serious business ahead—and now she believes. But, now I must see you at once."

"Very well, my good friend. But I am busy on a new kind of work—I, a high caste Brahmin, am become a common tradesman—a tailor, and for my faithful comrade, Dr. Alden!"

The physician was almost irritable.

"This is too serious for jesting. I must get into the Black Order immediately!" he reiterated.

"Exactly, Doctor Alden. And I am now in my humble lodgings, pricking my thumbs and fingers with needles, as I concentrate with all the strength of a yogi trained mind upon the tremendous task of duplicating for you my own costume as a member of that mysterious and malevolent organization. We will enter together as soon as I can complete my task. I will come to you at once."

"Very good. What has happened since you were admitted?" demanded Alden, eager in spite of his desire for vengeance.

"I came so near being an accomplice in an astral murder that I am still quaking, my good friend! I will tell you all about it when I see you."

"Ha!" and there was a triumphant ring in the physician's laugh. "I took a hand in the game myself, Haji. But now I'm going into it with both feet and the rest of my body. Lose no time!"

The principal participant of this grim drama, which escaped a tragic denouement by such a narrow margin, was not to escape a further vivid reminder of it.

When the big car swung up the driveway of the Maynard estate, Myra's mother sighed with relief, encircling the girl's shoulders in an affectionate caress.

"My dear, I am never going to let you go from my sight again. We will never have a repetition of Dr. Alden's dangerous folly."

"Mother, you must not interfere, for I have come to an understanding of the terrible undercurrent in this case. We must not be short-sighted because of our present feelings. The risk of today may save us from terrible years to come."

Myra had aged since the arrival in the house of Dr. Alden only a few days but an eternity in their strain on her emotions. There was a surprising depth in her meaning which disturbed her mother. She looked down at the drawn, tired face of the girl with stirring concern. She realized that overnight her nestling had become a woman.

"Let us talk no more about it, child."

But as they mounted the piazza steps to ring the summons for Willis, Myra drew back with a scream of terror.

"What's the matter, Myra?"

"Look at the knocker? Didn't you see that face, with its thumbs pointing up?" cried the girl, cowering nervously behind her mother.

Mrs. Maynard regarded Myra with a forced calm, and then drew out her lorgnette. She surveyed the brass head and turned toward Myra—perplexed, dismayed.

"My child, that same old foolish, grinning knocker has been there for years. There is nothing wrong with it!"

The girl peered again, and then covered her face with her hands.

O, mother! It is that terrible man whose face has appeared so many times. He made what Dr. Alden calls the sign of the devil worshipers. But now he has gone!"

Willis was swinging the portal, and Myra shied past the knocker, followed by her mother.

As she reached the drawing room she sank into a divan, breathing heavily, although the girl tried to compose herself.

"It was blurry—as though it were a red electric light, mother. * * * Oh, we must end this all soon, or I shall go mad, mad!" she sobbed, miserably.

Her mother placed her arm about the trembling shoulders.

"Myra, my child—I fear that perhaps you are already——"

She did not complete the sentence.

(To be continued next Sunday.)

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He—What's her social status?

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The Mysteries of Myra

An Inspiring Novel and Motion Picture Drama

Written by Hereward Carrington.

Dramatized by Charles W. Goddard.

(Synopsis of Preceeding Chapters).

Dr. Payson Alden, a physician who has spent many years studying the occult and spiritism, discovers the plotting of a band of devil worshipers to cause the death of Myra Maynard, a beautiful heiress, in order that her fortune may pass to them, according to the secret will of her father, a former member of their society. Myra's mother, greatly opposed to all study of the psychic, ignores his offer to help protect the girl, and the physician burglarizes the residence in order to learn the method of the evil workers. He discovers that Myra is a sleep-walker, and interrupts her just in time to prevent her suicide on the eve of her eighteenth birthday, as her two sisters had already done.

Arthur Varney, a wealthy clubman, who is a suitor for Myra's hand, is in reality in league with the members of the Black Order, although he endeavors to persuade the master to spare the girl's life. A second attempt on Myra's life is made by the sending of an Oriental flower which opens at night, liberating a poisonous vapor; but Dr. Alden's suspicion has caused the flower to be carried to his own bedroom. He is almost dying from its noxious effects, when Myra, who has learned the art of crystal gazing from him, is warned of his trouble. She saves his life.

The following day the doctor hypnotises Myra in his laboratory, and her astral body is projected to the secret meeting place of the Black Order men. With incantations and the science of black magic they endeavor to cut the "astral thread" between the spirit and the body. They almost succeed, but "prayer triumphs where science fails," and the doctor and the girl's mother bring back her spirit in time to save her life.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Friendship of Haji.

DR. ALDEN curbed his impatience with difficulty, as he fumed about the laboratory. He determined that he would never risk Myra's life again by a projection of the astral body, for the members of the Black Order had struck upon the most cunnning of psychic traps.

"I played directly into their hands," he muttered. "But Prof. Haji can teach me more of their methods. I wonder why he takes so long?"

Payson Alden rang up his Hindoo friend once more to urge speed.

"I am coming at once. I have finished the necessary costume, my friend," was the mild retort.

"On second thought," continued Alden, "they are undoubtedly watching my house. It would be fatal for us to be seen together now. Meet me somewhere, and depend upon it that I will give them the slip from this end, if you can do the same there."

"Splendid, Dr. Alden. We may as well get near the order meeting place. If you will take a taxicab to Vassover street and Belmont boulevard you will strike a corner of the park. Go down the path and keep walking until you reach the rustic bridge. Beyond this is a small summer house. I will be there, waiting for you. It will take you nearly half an hour to reach the place from your home. I will bring the costumes with me for immediate action."

The doctor hurriedly obeyed instructions after assuring himself once more that his revolver was in working order and safely stowed away in his hip pocket.

The rendezvous was on the outskirts of the city and was a tedious ride to him.

But at last he found the dark-skinned student of the occult biding his time in the covert of the rustic summer house.

The two men greeted each other warmly. It was evident that theirr was a friendship beyond mere words. Alden and Haji had been working for many months on the investigation of the mysterious workings of the Black Order. So, it was that the Hindoo's success in gaining membership was a triumph for the two of them.

It had ben a difficult task, as Alden realized from the long description of the tortuous initiation with which his friend now regaled him.

"I have indeed descended into the depths of horror during the three days of my initiation. That is why you did not hear from me sooner," ended up Haji. "But the terrific battle with Miss Maynard's spirit was the most harrowing adventure of them all. I felt certain that she was doomed. How did you save her?"

Alden described his own sensations and the final surprising efficacy of prayer. He then eagerly demanded to know more about the ruling spirit of the devil-worshipers.

"I know nothing about him, except that he is a foreigner, not an American. The order is one of the most ancient origin—thousands of years old, I have been told. The order had been practically wiped out in Europe because of the great war, but the master intends starting branches throughout the United States within the next few weeks. If he succeeds, Heaven help the hapless country!"

Alden's firm mouth tightened in an ironical smile.

"He will never do it, for I intend to end his career of crime within the hour. You must teach me the signs and passwords, so that we may get him together," he answered. "It was a wonderful thing that we came together, Professor Haji, after all your studies in Europe and the East, for we shall do a wonderful service to humanity."

"It is so. Well, the secret entrance to the underground meeting room is not over a ten minutes' walk from here. We may as well be preparing for the attempt."

While Haji was rehearsing the physician in the symbols and cabalistic words of the devil ritual, the prime spirit of the black magicians was attending to a strange rehearsal of his own.

In the open air, within the stone enclosure of an old house isolated from any immediate neighbors, the Master was adjusting a respirating mask. It was similar to those worn on the battlefields and in the trenches of Europe for the protection against poison gas assaults.

On an old stone bench lay a box whose label declared that it contained "One gross of Marvel rubber toy balloons." Beside the box were two metal tanks containing some curious gas which was the evident reason for the protective mask which now covered the evil face completely.

The Master carefully filled one of the deflated balloons which he took from their case, studying the pressure of the vapor with satisfaction. He used gas from each one of the tanks until the balloon was almost bursting. Tying its mouth with strong white thread, he bobbed it up and down. It might have seemed a childish action, except for the ominous care with which he held his guarded head away from the toy.

He jabbed the taut rubber with a pin, and it exploded to leave a tiny puff of green vapor in the air.

He nodded approvingly and removed the mask, after making sure that the fumes had disappeared. Behind the bench were two more respirating masks, which he placed in the side of the tanks. Then with his cunning smile, registering supreme self-satisfaction, he retired into the house through a rattling, bolted doorway.

He reappeared presently, leading two members of the cult.

"Before you fill the balloons make sure to have the masks adjusted," was the curt command. "Then obey my instructions to the letter. I will not fail this time."

He disappeared as his two assistants obediently imitated the mysterious work. They filled more than forty of the balloons before appearing satisfied. Then tying the toys together in the manner of street venders, they removed their masks and entered the portal.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Hall of Mysteries.

ALDEN and Haji had compited their preparations.

"Well, are we ready for the invasion?" asked the doctor.

"Yes, and here is where we separate," replied Haji. "I will go down this short road while you walk through the underbrush until you reach the top of the knoll. From there we can see the old farmhouse which I am sure covers the underground meeting place. I can take you from the hill to the entrance that they seldom use. There we will meet," and he pointed out the spot.

The two went their ways, Alden tingling with a new thrill of adventure as he realized that his great hope was at last to be realized.

How surprisingly our ambitions work out. For months he had wanted to enter the Black Order, and yet now that the moment was at hand, through a devious and unexpected course, he could barely realize the certainty of it.

"It seems too good to be true—if I can only surprise the leader himself, catch the spider in his own web, before he is warned, what a triumph!" he told himself.

The Hindoo walked along more slowly, a watchful eye out for observers.

His caution was well taken, for he suddenly stepped behind an evergreen as he heard voices.

Two men extricated themselves from the opening of a great hollow tree, not ten feet from his hiding place. They bore in their hands the strings of the bobbing balloons, which they handled gingerly.

The Hindoo's jaw fell. Here were two of the evil brethren, and the purpose of their strange burden perplexed him.

He stepped behind the brush to get a better and more protected view. His foot crunched a dried twig. The first of the couple heard the noise, and he called to his comrade.

"There's some one over there. Quick, this way to the road."

The twain rushed through the thicket like frightened rabbits.

As they did so the balloons became tangled in the branches of a low-spreading cedar tree.

"Fool!" cried the first man.

"Look, there's a man up the hill!" answered his mate, espying Alden in the distance.

The two quickened their steps, unseen by the physician.

But one of their balloons became loosened from the pack and remained tangled in the branch of the cedar tree.

When they had disappeared Haji stepped to the balloon to ponder over its mystery. He caught at the string to pull is away. As he did so the delicate rubber burst!

The Hindoo saw the cloud of greenish vapor and put his hand into it, drawing it back toward his nostrils.

"Oooh!" he groaned as he staggered unsteadily.

His senses swam and he tried to support himself by holding the bobbing cedar branch. As everything grew black about him he gave a faint call: "Help, doctor, help!"

Alden caught the sound, and rushed down the hill, regardless of the switching and scratching of the thicket's twigs against his face as he forced his way to the side of his friend.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed, on the sight. Then, instinctively, he leaned over the unconscious man to begin artificial respiration. A few movements of the arms and a rhythmic pressure on the lung box brought Haji back to consciousness.

"What on earth happened to you?" demanded Alden, in natural excitement.

"That! That!" was all his companion could hoarsely enunciate, pointing toward the dangling string and the fragmentary shreds of rubber.

Alden reached for the remnants and sniffed them, to jerk his head back with a wry expression.

"Uuh!" he muttered, as he choked slightly. "No wonder. It's probably cynogen mixed with some lighter gas. That's one of the most deadly vapors in the world."

Haji had regained his voice enough to explain the identity and the strange appearance of the two men.

"They are on some new campaign of deviltry. I wonder where they are going?" mused the Oriental.

"I know where they are going," was the doctor's firm conviction. "And that is toward the Maynard home. We must get back there at once! Myra's life is in the greatest danger yet, for that gas is deadly and instant poison. Be sure, Haji, that they have some definite manner in which it is planned to get that poison to her."

"True," agreed the other. "But we must lose no time in getting into the order. This hollow tree is the secret entrance which I told you about. It is seldom used, and we had best make quick work of the matter, now that we are here. Then we can hurry back to Miss Myra's home in that taxicab which you kept waiting on the boulevard."

Haji carried with him the satchel containing the two costumes for them to wear.

"Perhps you are right, my friend. But let us use every second. What had we better do now?" Alden was for once abstracted with his double problem, and he looked in helpless perplexity at his mentor.

"Put on this gown and hood, over which I worked so hard, to copy from my own. Then we will slip back into the passage from the rear."

No sooner suggested than done; within another three minutes the two adventurers were picking their way cautiously along a roughly excavated subterranean passage.

Alden's pocket lamp was useful, for the surface of the ground was uneven. He flickered it only occasionally, while the Hindoo kept a warning hand of guidance upon his arm.

"What awful smell is that?" inquired Alden, suddenly.

"It is the infernal incense," whispered the other. "Be very qunet, now, for we are directly under one of the chambers. Come, we must climb the circular stairway to the entrance door."

They cautiously ascended, as Haji led the way with sure steps. The Hindoo had made the most of his opportunities for study, and his knowledge of the labyrinth maze brought them soon to the main portal of the order chamber.

Here he gave three knocks with clenched knuckles.

A tiny panel slid up and the vestibule was diffused with a soft glow of green light from a curiously wrought metal lantern above the door.

The two hooded figures were in the view of the questioning eyes within.

Haji imitated to the letter by Dr. Alden, gave the devil-worshiper's sign, fists clenched and pressed against the cheeks through the disguising masks and thumbs upturned like horns on either side of the head.

There was an instant silent pause. Then a series of rhythmic knocks came from the opposite side of the big portal. Haji replied with seven knocks, repeated thrice.

Alden, mindful of his careful tutoring, did the same, stepping in front of the Hindoo to accomplish this necessary signal.

"What is the word, brother?" came a hoarse query from the cautious slit.

Alden leaned forward and whispered the Sanscrit phrase which he had memorized.

The door swung back upon its hinges, and he entered. As he did so, his right hand slid around to the opening in the black gown which was fastened from behind.

He whipped the revolver from his pocket, and before the lone guardian of the order room realized what had happened its muzzle was pressed against his heart.

Alden leaned forward to whisper hoarsely: "If you make one sound, it will be your last!"

The man drew back, but Haji's wiry hands were gripping his arm. The menacing revolver was jabbed still harder against his breast. He surrendered discreetly.

The black hood was jerked from his head and used by the Hindoo, twisted into a roll, as a gag, to be drawn tightly and firmly about his mouth.

Haji produced some lengths of rope, which were bound securely about his ankles and wrists. For good measure, Alden forced the subdued man to the floor, where, face downward, his wrists and ankles were bound together. The physician was certain now that his premier prisoner could not crawl away.

1 ALDEN TOOK NO CHANCES 2 THE FACE OF THE GRANDMASTER

"Where is the other room?" asked Alden, in a whisper, as he rounded out this task.

"There," and Haji pointed a nervous hand to the left. "Behind the altar."

The Hindoo had given the physician a lengthy description, illustrated with several diagrams, during their talk in the rustic summer house. So, confident of his knowledge, Alden advanced. Haji essayed to follow him, and he turned with a shake of the head.

"No; watch this man;" he may prove dangerous," whispered the doctor. "I will reconnoiter and return at once."

Haji nodded, but his curiosity was natural. It was also extremely costly.

He watched Alden disappear through the black velvet curtains into the other compartment. The room, with which he was already familiar, seemed thoroughly harmless. The incense was burning feebly, with a few twining lines of black smoke, which rose to lose themselves in the dark corners about the two bronze idols which adorned the rear of the room with their squat forms.

Haji satisfied himself that his prisoner was absolutely helpless and that with his face down he could not even watch his own actions.

Then the Hindoo walked softly to the curtains to peer forth at the proceedings in the next room.

As he did so, an eerie thing occurred.

Without a sound of warning, one of the idols began to change its pose from the rigid cross-legged attitude! A foot advanced and the figure slid to the floor with the sinuous ease of a serpent!

A bronze-hued arm disappeared into the depths of the black wall, and a glittering dagger was drawn forth!

The barefooted idol glided toward the prostrate prisoner, as Haji watched the actions of his friend, with his head protruding through the curtains into the next room!

There was a soundless slash of the knife, and the ropes about hands and ankles were cut!

The dagger was laid noiselessly upon the floor beside the liberated man. The idol returned to its pose in the dim light, with face averted as it had been before!

The prisoner suddenly realized that he had been unpinioned. He cautiously turned his head, wondering who could have performed the miracle.

But the devil-worshipers were too accustomed to surprising powers to waste many thoughts in wondering about causes!

The man craftily reached forth his hand for the knife, which he drew under him.

Then he resumed his position face downward.

"I wonder what Alden can be doing?" thought Haji, for his friend had disappeared from view within the inky interior of the other room. Not even the little electric torch was now in evidence.

He turned to look at his prisoner, and, reassured, peered through the curtains once again. As he did so the recumbent member rose to his knees, and with the dagger drawn rushed upon the unguarded Haji!

CHAPTER XIX.

The Magnetic Hand.

HAJI heard the rushing feet in time to dodge forward, as the dagger went over his shoulder!

He struggled to reach his revolver, hidden like the doctor's in a hip pocket, under the gown. But for the minute he was tangled in the curtain and the black folds of his disguise.

He sprang away, retreating behind the altar, as the other pursued him with the knife. Neither made a sound! Nor did the obliging idol even seem to open an eye for a peep at the strange struggle.

The revolver was reached, and the other member of the cult now dashed for the door, realizing the futility of fighting bullets with steel.

Haji hesitated to shoot for an instant—fearing to betray the work of the doctor.

The instant's delay permitted the other to escape into the subterranean passage. The Hindoo rushed after him, weapon drawn, this time determined to take a pot shot. But the other had disappeared as though by magic.

As he paused, wondering which of the devious channels to follow, the idol again came to action. The figure slid down from its pedestal once more. With that serpentine swiftness which characterized its movement before it glided across toward the open door.

There was a clang and a clatter of closing bolts and a heavy chain lock!

Haji turned to find himself locked out!

As he beat furiously upon the door with the butt of his revolver, he called the passwords vainly.

The guardian idol noiselessly returned to his cross-legged pose and the room reverberated with the unavailing alarms of the excited Hindoo without!

Within another secret room of the devil worshipers' den a number of the members, lying at ease on black-covered couches, were brought to their feet by the cries of a fellow of the clan outside a grated door.

"Quick, brethren! We are attacked!"

As they rushed to admit him, the master of ceremonies appeared from another inner doorway, his hand commandingly raised.

"Fear not, brethren. The master bids you assemble in the pit. All will be well."

As he spoke there were grunts of wicked anticipation: well did they know the fate which yawned for an intruder. They donned their masks and black gowns, and following the leader marched Indian-file through the passageway. Haji, hiding in one of the recesses of the way, waited until the last man had passed him and then quietly joined them without attracting attention. The Hindoo had replaced his weapon and hoped to regain the vantage which his curiosity had forfeited.

Within the Stygian maze of passages Alden had found himself completely bewildered. Haji had not learned all: the deceiving black curtains which hung on all sides had cunningly led to a series of underground rooms, each like its neighbor, until he finally paused in despair.

He drew the flashlight again, and its rays disclosed the first object which he had seen in several minutes of walking.

It was the carven figure of satan protruding from the wall like a gargoyle of Notre Dame.

"Well, there's a familiar face!" muttered the physician. He drew his revolver, and advanced toward the image, standing before it absorbed in the weird artistry of the carving.

As he did so he heard a demoniac laugh behind him; he whirled about, but saw no one. The remainder of the room disclosed to the searching shaft of his lamp nothing but the interminable black curtains!

Then came his next surprise!

A soft glow of blood-red light began to spring up around the room, from hitherto invisible discs on walls, on floor, on the ceiling!

He looked about in natural alarm, as the light increased in brilliancy, until it was painfully dazzling.

The, as he looked down at his feet, he became aware that a circular pit was opening about him, leaving him standing on a small round platform. Below he could see nothing except the piercing, biting effuigence of crimson light, which seemed to burn with its tremendous sharpness.

The physician, scientist that he was, had seen no illumination of this nature before, and he could not fathom the mystery of it.

There was a curious vibration in the air; it seemed as though the ether were throbbing with some strange, terrible force of nature!

Alden looked about him, squaring his shoulders gallantly, to await the worst.

The floor steadily sank, as though into the liquid depths of red, volcanic lava.

He was tempted to jump—and yet it was impossible to reach the sides of the opening, with such a slender purchase for his feet. He seemed on solid support, despite the tiny radius, and so he waited.

"Well, where are you? Who are you?"

He spoke to empty walls, at first—yet, again and again came the cackle of unholy mirth—again behind him, and this time over his head.

"Well, at least he's the most ingenious fiend in the world," was the physician's grudging mental compliment to the unknown.

"Are you afraid, black master of the devil worshipers?" cried the physician, defiantly.

"No. Are you?" came the apt reply, as the voice of the guiding spirit of the evil brotherhood came from the very bowels of the earth before him.

Alden realized the hopelessness of his position, for the time being. In a spirit of bravado he jammed the revolver into his pocket through the slit in the black gown. Then he turned to speak to the unseen observer.

"All this illumination is very pretty, but I am not afraid. I came here to see you, and I would like to succeed."

As he spoke a long metallic arm slid down behind him, unseen—iron fingers extended. There was a snapping of high-power electric flashes as the steel revolver drawn by tremendous magnetic force suddenly shot from his pocket into the waiting fingers. The arm was drawn with equal suddenness into the space above, and as he whirled about, realizing that his weapon had disappeared, he clapped his hand to the empty pocket with almost a terrorized feeling of apprehension. Even the loose cartridges in his pocket had disappeared in the same mysterious manner!

"Inasmuch as it is your last wish on earth, I will grant it. You may now see me," chanted the mocking voice.

Before him the face of the evil pontiff of the devil cult gradually materialized into view!

The master held his hands against his cheeks in the customary "thumbs-up" pose!

Despite Dr. Payson Alden's gallant determination, a chill of almost superstitious terror paralyzed him for the nonce! This eerie business, the weird lights, the mysteriously disappearing weapon—all these were enough to shake the spirit out of any normal man. And despite his study of psychic things, the doctor was essentially normal in everything.

He gulped, pressed his hand to a dripping, cold forehead, as the master chortled merrily in his crocodile glee!

"What do you mean by all this? I want to get out of here," began the doctor, when he found his tongue.

The other laughed cynically.

"What do you mean by coming here?" was the answer, in rasping tones. "You have seen what no stranger is ever allowed to see—the Red Flower of the Black Death! Even as you forced yourself into these sacrosanct domains against my rules to do me unto death, I sentence you to be buried alive as the beginning of your punishment!"

As the half-shut eyes laughed in gloating glee the face began to fade from view.

Alden felt a new bibrant, and he looked down.

The pedestal upon which he had been captive was beginning to sink into the great crater of burning fuminosity.

The taunting laugh echoed again in its ubiquitous way.

He was tempted to leap—anywhere, anyhow! Yet there was nowhere to leap!

"And as you breathe your last Myra Maynard will leave this mortal life. Ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha!"

The laughter semed to swell by some fiendish acoustic device until it roared and thundered around him like the hurricane howling through the entrance of some great grotto!

It was maddening, tearing at his very soul.

"This must be a nightmare." Muttering, he pinched his arms and cheeks. "Or I'm going insane!"

But he realized too horribly well that it was not a dream. His cheeks were wet with perspiration, cold despite the heat of the awful engulfing waves of red light.

"Well, I guess it's all over," he muttered, desperately, certain that he was to be plunged into some great furnace.

Then suddenly the light disappeared!

Everything was black about him. He was still descending slowly. But there was not a sound. It was cold now; raw, biting cold, which ate into the marrow.

There were sharp blasts from one side and then the other of wet wind which caused the "goose flesh" to evidence itself all over his body.

He blew upon his aching fingers to warm them. His knees became weaker, until at last he sank down to squat upon the round top of the pedestal. There was only silence, so oppressive that he felt that he could hear it! He sat there, waiting, he knew not what!

CHAPTER XX.

The Balloon Peddler.

MYRA MAYNARD was embroidering some dainty feminine mystery as her mother sat on the other side of the library table reading aloud some of the society gossip of the morning paper.

But Myra was neither a good listener nor as deft with her needle as usual.

Her mother paused to study the girl's abstracted expression with growing anxiety.

"Myra?"

The girl did not reply.

"Myra, my dear. Are you thinking about this spiritualistic business again? I was speaking to you."

"Oh, mother dear, I beg your pardon. My mind is just wool-gathering, and I didn't hear you. It's nothing serious."

"What is worrying you, child?"

Myra sighed, returning her needles, multi-hued threads and the linen to the wicker sewing basket.

"I am wondering why Dr. Aiden has not telephoned me. You remember, he promised that he would be careful, but I am so afraid that something has happened to him!"

She twisted her slender white fingers nervously. Mrs. Maynard tossed the paper to the table, almost glaring at the girl, as the maternal indignation boiled and bubbled.

"Now, Myra, my little girl. We may as well have a little common sense talk right now. I cannot understand why this precious Dr. Alden should interest you! You have only known him for a few days. He has burdened your mind with a lot of wretched, stupid, impractical piffle, which he calls 'psychic science.' And today, in particular, he was responsible for your going through a most dreadful ordeal—not to mention my own sufferings!"

"Mother, darling—you are the most darling mother in the world—there are some things you seem unable to understand. Sometimes I feel as though I were older than you, and that you are just a big, sweet girl and that I'm your doll! Can't you see how much Dr. Alden did for me already? He saved my life the other night."

Mrs. Maynard threw up her hanks disparagingly.

"Yes, and what of it? It just happened that in some way he interrupted your sleep-walking, which you inherited from your father. I appreciate that, dear; but I do want you to stop these experiments with hypnotism and magic, and the rest of this silly rubbish. You are too young a girl to be filling your brain with such old wives' tales. And Dr. Alden is too old a man to be doing it. Why he is entirely too old for you."

Myra became indignant in turn. Here was the question which always raises objections in the mind of a miss just escaping from her teens.

"Indeed I do not see why? I am eighteen now and many girls are married when they are sixteen to much older men than Dr. Alden and much worse-looking ones besides!"

Mrs. Maynard sensed the drift of Myra's thoughts.

"Why, I thought you liked Arthur Varney!"

Myra's cheek crimsoned bewitchingly, as she averted her face, and the sprang up. She walked around the table to kiss her mother, although the blush still remained.

"Dear, I don't know exactly what I do think. Arthur is a dear fellow—so thoughtful and so strong. Yet he is an idler and does nothing but go around his clubs, or motoring, or eating, or"—here her voice took on a serious tone—"drinking. Mother, I may be a silly girl, and almost a prude, but it does seem to me as though Arthur is dissipating terribly of late."

Mrs. Maynard was silent.

"He looks changed, mother. He used to be so cheery, so strong, while of late he seldom looks me in the eye with that old jolly way of his. I am disappointed in Arthur," and Myra walked pensively to the window. "But I do wish Dr. Alden would telephone to let me know that he has not done anything rash."

She looked down the driveway toward the street.

"Oh, see the funny man selling balloons. I haven't seen one since we were down at the seashore. And, look, mother, there comes Arthur Varney now!"

Mrs. Maynard was cheered at the thought of a little conversation on subjects which she understood. Varney's conversation was never intellectual enough to adduce headaches.

"I'm glad," she said. "We'll have a little tea and his favorite marmalade."

Myra was watching in surprise.

"Why, he's talking to the balloon man. Surely, Arthur wouldn't buy a balloon—how absurd!"

Myra laughed, and then saw with surprise that the peddler was walking up the drive with her friend.

Myra went to meet him at the door, as Mrs. Maynard ordered Willis to prepare the teaset.

"Hello, Myra! This man tried to sell me some balloons. I thought you might want some yourself," he jestingly greeted her.

"Of course not. I'll take nothing less expensive than a hydroplane or a Zeppelin. These are entirely too small," answered the girl. "Come in, for I am worried and want your advice. What were you talking about so earnestly to your balloon merchant? Were you explaining the beauties of our architecture? I saw you pointing up toward my window?"

The sharp eyes somehow seemed to have embarrassed the visitor, who hesitated and then laughed genially.

"No, I was just asking him how high these balloons would fly. I'm always interested in scientific subjects, you know."

"Well, I don't want any balloons, so go away Mr. Balloon Man, and sell your airships to the boys down the street, at the schoolhouse," and Myra closed the door behind her visitor.

"What is worrying you, dear girl?" asked Varney, pressing her hand tenderly, as they entered the drawing room.

He frowned ever so slightly as he felt the fingers drawn quickly away from his own.

"I can't think why Dr. Alden has not telephoned me as he promised he would. You know he is investigating the Black Order, and I am afraid that something has happened to him."

"The Black Order? Whatever may that be? I think that man has studied too much. Or more than likely he does what most doctors are said to do—uses the hypodermic needle to increase his imaginative ability."

Mrs. Maynard looked up startled.

"Do you mean that he uses 'dope,' Arthur? Oh, how dreadful!"

Myra shot an indignant glance.

"Arthur, that is a cowardly remark. You should say it to his face."

But Varney shook his head wisely.

"It is not a bad guess; all that rambling talk about spirits and magical writing, messages from the spooks, and Australian bodies or whatever it was he called them."

Mrs. Maynard was scolding Willis for his tardiness.

"But, Myra," spoke up Varney, "if you are worried about the poor fellow, why not let us take a walk, you and I, over to the police station, on the other avenue. Get your hat and cloak, and we'll put the bluecoats on his trail, to protect him from the wicked goblins."

Myra bit her lip.

"It is more serious than you suspect. I think that is a god idea. We'll be right back, mother, for tea. But, first, I am going to call up Dr. Alden's office on the telephone, to make sure that he is not in. Then I'll run upstairs and get my hat."

As she sat down at the library table, Varney walked toward the window. He seemed dissatisfied with the hanging of the shade. He pulled it down a few feet and then up.

"The light is better now, don't you think?" he inquired, surveying it nervously.

Outside, just beneath the window of Myra's room the balloon peddler had let loose his balloons two or three at a time, by a strange coincidence, just as the curtain was dipped.

The fellow, regardless of the value of his wares, had foolishly liberated them until at last two of them bobbed into the open window, as they glided up the house close to the walls. The light spring wind, blowing in through the opening, assisted him in his curious purpose.

Then the balloon merchant slipped down the drive again, as Myra vainly attempted to get a reply from the doctor's house.

CHAPTER XXI.

Buried Alive.

STRANGE things had been happening during this same interval, which explained why the physician was not in his own comfortable laboratory.

At last a dim light, this time of that evanescent green which percolates into the depths of ocean water, had taken the place of the flaming red.

Payson Alden's optic nerves still smarted from the actinic burn to the earlier hue, and he felt a sense of relief as he suddenly realized the pedestal had ceased moving.

He looked about him, and perceived that he was in a pit-like room, draped like the others in black cloth.

To his astonishment he was surrounded by thirteen black coffins, standing on end, the panels of which suddenly opened.

Thirteen men, as though at some given signal, stepped out, raising their left hands to point at his breast, as they muttered a weird chant beneath the muffling folds of their black hoods.

Alden made a lurch toward one of them, and a quick blow sent the first gowned figure to the ground, but the others were upon him. It was a short, bitter struggle. In a trice he was bound hand and foot, and forced to sit upon one of the coffins.

At a raised hand from a leader, one of the figures walked to the side of the room, drawing forth a pick and shovel from some concealment.

He began to dig a grave in the soft earth of the subterranean room. No sound except the steady picking and the occasional scrape of the shovel came to Alden's ears.

One by one the men left, apparently to prepare some further rite in the horrendous ceremony.

He began to count the strokes of the pick, speculating dumbly how many would be necessary to finish the gruesome task. Something kept him silent—words were so hopeless, so mocking in this wretched fragment of time left to him. His senses began to reel, as he lost count of the pick blows.

All sense of time seemed to have left him; it was a hundred years of racking meditation between every down stroke of that cruel, gleaming metal.

He closed his eyes, to bar the sight. As he opened them, during a sudden lull, he saw that all the gowned figures were gone but the grave-digger.

This man approached him with the startling message, whispered hurriedly: "Be careful, Doctor. It is I, Haji. Don't struggle—save your breath, and I will get you out. They have gone for more men. Sssh!"

And he dug more industriously than ever, as the members began to file into the room again. Two of them swung braziers containing that sickening incense, and Alden fairly gasped for breath in the dark air.

At last the task was finished, and the prisoner was lifted by strong hands, roughly shoved into his coffin and the lid placed on it.

The physician filled his lungs with as much air as possible, and then breathed easily. How Haji could get him out of this fearsome predicament he could not imagine. Yet, the brilliant Hindoo, who had studied in all parts of the world, whose word had never yet failed, must know some secret means, as yet undreamed of by the other members.

Alden knew that the air in the coffin would supply his heart with enough oxygen for perhaps thirty minutes; then it would all be over.

He felt the coffin dropped into the grave, and then the blood-freezing sound of the dirt thrown on the box came to his ears.

He could detect the pounding down of the soil on the shallow grave, and the last recollection before he became unconscious was the rhythmic beat of the feet on the soil above him.

The devils were dancing their jubila-

(Continued on Fifteenth Page.)

Take Iron, Says Doctor, if You Want Plenty of "Stay There" Strength Like an Athlete!

Ordinary Nuxated Iron Will Make Delicate, Nervous, Rundown People 200 per cent Stronger in Two Weeks' Time, in Many Cases.

NEW YORK, N. Y.—Most people foolishly seem to think they are going to get renewed health and strength from some stimulating medicine, secret nostrum or narcotic drug, said Dr. Sauer, a well known specialist who has studied widely both in this country and Europe, when as a matter of fact, real and true strength can only come from the food you eat. But people often fail to get the strength out of their food because they haven't enough iron in their blood to enable it to change food into living matter. From their weakened, nervous condition they know something is wrong, but they can't tell what, so they generally commence doctoring for stomach, liver or kidney trouble or symptoms of some other ailment caused by the lack of iron in the blood. This thing may go on for years, while the patient suffers untold agony. If you are not strong or well, you owe it to yourself to make the following test. See how long you can work or how far you can walk without becoming tired. Next take two five grain tablets of ordinary nuxated iron three times per day after meals for two weeks. Then test your strength again and see for yourself how much you have gained. I have seen dozens of nervous, rundown people who were ailing all the while, double and even triple their strength and endurance and entirely get rid of all symptoms of dyspepsia, liver and other troubles in from ten to fourteen days' time simply by taking iron in the proper form, and this after they had in some cases been doctoring for months without obtaining any benefit. But don't take the old forms of reduced iron, iron acetate or tincture of iron simply to save a few cents. You must take iron in a form that can be easily absorbed and assimilated like nuxated iron if you want it to do you any good, otherwise it may prove worse than useless. Many an athlete or prize fighter has won the day simply because he knew the secret of great strength and endurance and filled his blood with iron before he went into the affray, while many another has gone down to inglorious defeat simply for the lack of iron.

NOTE—Nuxated Iron recommended above by Dr. Sauer, is one of the newer organic iron compounds. Unlike the older inorganic iron products, it is easily assimilated, does not injure the teeth, make them black, nor upset the stomach; on the contrary, it is a most potent remedy, in nearly all forms of indigestion, as well as for nervous, run-down conditions. The Manufacturers have such great confidence in Nuxated Iron that they offer to forfeit $100.00 to any charitable institution if they cannot take any man or woman under 60 who lacks iron and increase their strength 200 per cent or over in four weeks time provided they have no serious organic trouble. They also offer to refund your money if it does not at least double your strength and endurance in ten days' time. It is dispensed in this city by Jas. O'Donnell's Drug Store, People's Drug Store and all other druggists.—Advt.

The Mysteries of Myra An Inspiring Novel and Motion Picture Drama

Written by Hereward Carrington.

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Dramatized by Charles W. Goddard.

(Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.)

Myra Maynard, a beautiful heiress, is the victim of an occult conspiracy; a society of black magicians, under the leadership of a master of psychic art, are endeavoring to cause her death in order to obtain possession of her father's estate. Dr. Payson Alden, a physician who has devoted his life to the study of the mystic, saves her from suicide while under the hypnotic influence of the band. With the aid of Prof. Haji, Dr. Alden gains admission to the underground meeting place of the Black Order. He is condemned to death for his interference, but is saved from live burial by his confederate. He reaches the Maynard home in time to save Myra from death by poisonous gases liberated from some toy balloons. Arthur Varney, a wealthy clubman, who is a suitor for Myra's hand, has been in league with the conspirators, but the watchfulness of Dr. Alden has thus far thwarted his efforts.

CHAPTER XXII.

The Lost Trail.

DR. ALDEN was more determined than ever to end the activities of the Black Order.

"I must get the authorities on this case now, for individual work will do no good," he told Haji, that morning. "You can go to the order meeting if you will, but be wary. For I intend to have the police raid it as soon as they can be stirred into definite action."

The Hindoo left Alden's residence, his heart troubled by misgivings. Yet he was faithful to his mission; there was no fear in heart.

The miraculous escape of the physician from the clutches of the devil worshipers was the subject of more than one whispered conference. Yet at the command of the evil pontiff, the master of ceremonies forbade any general discussion among the brethren. The master had already planned a method in which to trap the unknown traitor within their ranks, craftily as his work had been concealed.

Haji reported to the leader of ceremonies, and with several other members was sent out upon certain missions to remote parts of the city. Accordingly, it was not until some time later that he knew of the secret developments.

Payson Alden, after studying a plan of action from every angle, at last walked to the police station for an interview with the captain. At first his story was scouted.

"Sure, guv'nor, you're crazy! There ain't nothing like that going on in this district. Why, we're up here on the edge of the city. And that old house you tell about hasn't been occupied for twenty years."

"You're mistaken, officer," insisted Alden. "Just look at these bruises on my arms. I'm still stiff from the fight I had with them. If you will send some men with me, I'll prove to you how possible it is."

The officer grudgingly summoned two plain clothes men, who accompanied Alden toward the deserted farm. A stretch of woodland had to be passed before they came to the stone buildings.

Alden and his companions failed to observe two skulking figures peering at them from the shelter of some evergreens. One of the men waved his arm with a peculiar gesture, looking back toward a small culvert.

The signal was repeated by another watcher, so that his action was observed by a man peering from behind a stone wall through binoculars. This man disappeared abruptly.

As they prowled about through the thicket Alden finally located the hollow-trunked tree through which he had gained entry to the subterranean chambers of the order.

"There, officers," declared the doctor. "You see the marks where I was dragged out. This leads directly to the meeting rooms."

The detectives studied the place carefully. One of them cautiously entered, and sent the ray of a pocket light into the cavity.

"Yes, there are steps. This is a sure lead," said he. "Jim, you go back and tell the chief that we've got the place. Bring a bunch of the reserves. And don't go to sleep, either, for these birds will begin to fly south!"

The other man hurried away.

The detective plied the physician with questions. Alden limited his descriptions of the inner workings of the order to the assertion that the men had tried to kill him for some unknown reason. He volunteered nothing about the connection of Myra Maynard with the plot.

It was fully half an hour before the other detective returned with the captain and an automobile patrol wagon filled with uniformed reserves. The captain himself ordered them to surround the old building.

"When I blow the whistle, close in from all sides and I'll watch this getaway here myself!" he cried.

The bluecoats hurried to obey. With a drawn revolver the officer waited at the old tree.

Without any preliminary warning and even as they peered anxiously into the tree hole, a terrific explosion shook the ground beneath their feet.

The blast came from the interior of the subterranean stairway its force so terrific that the police captain and the doctor were both knocked to the ground. There was another concussion, and as the two startled men scrambled up, they were astounded to observe a continual line of heaving earth as foot after foot of the tunnel was blown up.

"Come! We'll get to the center!" was Alden's call to the captain as he ran unsteadily toward the old stone house.

But they were too late. Already the others were standing back from the structure helplessly fuming in rage. The roof had been blown off, the flames were pouring from the ramshackle windows.

A final explosion sent the remnants of the structure to the ground, as the flaming embers showered about them and drove them into a disconsolate ring about the place. Search as they would, they could find nothing left of the secret meeting place. The dynamite arrangements of the master had been perfect.

"Well, there's nothing for us to do here," said the captain, after his men had vainly ransacked the entire property. Not a soul was in sight, and the pursuit was a failure. "We're going back to the station house, and you'd better give up. Keep in touch with me, if anything turns up or you need protection. I didn't believe you at first, and even now I don't get the idea of this gang. But, I'll be wide awake when I can help you."

The doctor shook hands with him, and lit a cigarette.

"No, I don't need any protection. I've got my revolver, and can look after myself in the open," he said. "But I'll just look around here a bit more. I may find some clues that lead elsewhere. Good-by.

The policemen and detectives disappeared.

Alden sat down on the remnant of an old stone bench to ponder over the mystery.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The New Campaign.

MYRA MAYNARD paced the floor of her bedroom anxiously, as she studied the little French clock on her chiffonier.

"Dr. Alden is late again with his telephone call. I must try to reach him," her thoughts ran. "Oh, if we could only drop this whole pursuit and have peace. I hardly believe that revenge is worth the terrible risk he is running."

Her maid came upstairs to announce the arrival of a visitor. It was Arthur Varney.

His dark eyes glowed with pleasure and renewed confidence as he greeted the girl. But their conversation was interrupted by Willis, the butler, who had gone to answer a ring at the front door.

"Miss Myra, here's a letter which I found under the door. When I opened it there was not a soul in sight," he said, anxiously but politely trying to scrutinize the unusual handwriting on the black envelope.

A curious smile seemed to twist Varney's voluptuous lips for an instant, and Willis shot him a questioning glance. But the expression died away, and the well-bred calmness on the visitor's face disarmed the momentary suspicion.

Myra's fingers trembled as she tore open the envelope, to draw out the black paper message within.

The lustrous blue eyes dilated in sheer horror when she saw in the lower corner, in place of a signature, the outline of two fists, with thumbs upturned, drawn in white ink! It was the sign of the devil worshippers!

"Oh, mother!" she screamed, averting her glance before she dared to finish the message which was written above the dread symbol.

"What is it, dear?" and Mrs. Maynard's heart sank in apprehension as she rushed into the drawing room.

"Look! Look! That awful sign—and see what it says!" cried the girl, weakly.

Her mother took the black paper with a skeptical frown. She adjusted her reading glasses, and then suddenly evinced more of a shock than the young girl.

The massage was simple.

"Myra Maynard:

"When you receive this letter, Payson Alden will 'be beyond human aid'."

Then she handed it to Varney, who smiled at its words.

"It's some joke," he said. "Perhaps Alden sent it."

He looked down again at the symbol, and then his expression changed.

"By George, I forgot. I heard that the police had tried to raid this Black Order under Alden's directions. A patrolman told me about it as I came uptown—all the police are talking about it now. Perhaps this is connected with it. Didn't Alden say this was their sign?"

"Yes, yes!" and Myra caught the paper to study it again. She rushed to the telephone.

I will try to reach him at his home. If that fails, we must do something else at once," she declared, jigging the receiver impatiently.

The servant at the physician's home said that the doctor had not telephoned, nor had he been seen around the house since early morning.

"Oh, Arthur! What can I do? Can't you advise something?" Myra cried, helpless as a wounded bird, as she turned her plaintive eyes toward the half-sneering countenance of the club man.

"Well, if he's in trouble it is of his own making. You know I warned you both of fooling with this sort of stuff. I have heard that people lose their reason and their health, in this case he may have lost his life, by intruding in what was none of his business!"

There was an undercurrent of hate in his voice which did not go unobserved by Myra.

"Arthur, you must not be so bitter. He is a friend of mine, and saved my life more than once, at terrible effort and risk. If you are as good a friend as you say you are, you will help me," she pleaded.

"Oh, well, I don't like the fellow, he is a bore. But, he's human. I'd advise calling up the police station, to learn if they have seen him."

The lieutenant at the desk gruffly answered her call. When the girl mentioned her name his manner changed, and he called the captain to the instrument.

"Have you seen anything of Dr. Payson Alden?" she demanded. "Was he injured this morning?"

"No, Miss Maynard. We came very near being blown to bits by those crooks, but we couldn't find a sign of them. The doctor stuck around there just the same, after we gave up."

"Well' hasn't he telephoned you? Is that all you know about him?" she asked.

"Yes, Miss Maynard, the last we saw of Dr. Alden he was prowling around near the ruins."

Myra repeated the vague news to her mother and the visitor.

Varney repressed a smile of satisfaction, and then shook his head in assumed apprehension.

"That's terrible. If he is alone there, and these men actually did blow up the place, there is no telling what may have happened to him. Perhaps that letter was true after all."

Myra walked the floor tugging at her gown in nervous abstraction. As she approached the window to look down the driveway of the beautiful old estate Varney approached her.

"I have an idea,' he said in a low tone. "Come into the library away from your mother, and I will tell you."

Making an excuse she led the way to another room, while her mother wondered vaguely at the meaning of it all. Mrs. Maynard was floundering these days in her vain efforts to understand Myra's psychology. The girl had changed so greatly since the odd meeting with Dr. Payson Alden. Her growing interest in him was patent to the instinct of a mother, and, despite her disapproval of the occult experiments, Mrs. Maynard could not combat her own growing liking for the physician.

As they reached the seclusion of the other room Myra turned her nervous face to Varney.

"What do you think we can do?"

"Well," and his words were given with studied slowness. "You remember the doctor claimed that he hypnotized you, and that he projected your spirit or your, * * * What was it he called it?"

"My astral body' prompted Myra. "What has that to do with his danger now?"

Varney nodded impressively.

"That's just it! A whole lot. Now, tell me truthfully, was it actually the case Did your astral body really go somewhere? Is all that rubbish true?"

"Why, of course. I actually saw the men in the Black Order, just as though it were a dream. I left my own body, asleep there in the chair. I seemed to float through space and then found myself in a black room, with men kneeling on the floor, chanting some terrible words which I could not understand."

She trembled at the recollection.

"Yes," she continued. "It is almost unbelievable, Arthur. But it actually happened. I suffered, oh, such agonies! And I saw that horrible face of a man, with his thumbs upturned. Every day I see that face appear—sometimes on the glass of picture frames, sometimes in my goldfish globe! And I saw a vision of Dr. Alden in his bedroom, suffering from that queer gas which came from the plant, the night he stayed in the house here to protect us. Oh, Arthur, it is all too real—it is a waking nightmare!"

"Then it was the hypnotism which sent your astral body on its journey?" queried Varney, ingenuously.

"Yes! I saw the other visions without it, but when I took the spirit trip the doctor hypnotized me."

"Ah, there's the answer, then. Why don't you let me try to hypnotize you, and perhaps your astral can go hunt him up and save him?" he volunteered.

The girl shook her head slowly.

"No; you couldn't do it. It is a very scientific matter, you know, Arthur."

"Well, why not let me try? I've seen it done several times in exhibitions," he persisted. "You ought not to stop at anything that might save Alden."

This appeal succeeded, as Arthur Varney craftily intended it should do.

"Well, we can try. Perhaps I am more susceptible to it now, and can do it myself, to help," said Myra, as she sat down in a big lounging chair.

Varney looked into her eyes with all the strength of his soul; he made the curious hand passes with which the first stage of hypnotism is induced.

Myra, relaxed and subjective, kept her eyes fixed upon his, but the experiment was a failure.

"It's no use, Arthur. I'm too nervous," she said, despairingly. Then a new inspiration came to her aid. "But there is a wonderful machine in Dr. Alden's laboratory. We might be able to use that if you wish to go there with me."

Varney nodded enthusiastically.

"Splendid!" he cried. "Now that we are started we should carry the idea out. But how can we get in?"

"I'll call the car and we can be there in a few minutes. The maid will surely remember me and will let us wait for the doctor," she declared. I'll get my hat and coat right away."

VARNEY PAUSED - HAD HE SUCCEEDED ?

In a few minutes they had slipped out of the house, unobserved by her mother. The family automobile carried them to Alden's house, and they were soon in the physician's waiting room.

"We will wait until Dr. Alden returns," Myra told the servant, who nodded and withdrew.

"Now, where is the laboratory?" asked Varney.

"Upstairs," replied the girl. "I had a wonderful time there before. I wonder if we couldn't go up now? If the maid has gone it will be all right?"

"Yes," and Varney looked at his watch significantly. "It is high time. I'll look out."

The hallway outside the reception room was empty, and, under Myra's leadership, they hurried up the steps to the big room which contained the psychic apparatus of the investigator.

"But the door is locked!"

Myra tried it vainly, in disappointment. She drooped her head.

"We cannot do a thing," she said sadly.

"I'm not so sure. I have a bunch of keys," and Varney's lips gave the bare suggestion of that cunning smile. "Perhaps one of them may fit. Who knows?"

He tried several before the lock finally yielded, as he pushed the door open.

"Well, wasn't that a lucky coincidence!" he exclaimed. "I guess the fates must be with us after all. Now I wonder what sort of a place it is?"

Myra hurried in, while her companion followed, with a touch of apprehension in his manner as he gazed about at the castle of the arch-enemy of the Black Lodge.

"Well, and where is the hypnotizing machine?" asked Arthur Varney.

"There, that big apparatus with the mirrors. I remember that the doctor started it with some electrical switches," said the girl.

Varney stepped forward to examine the machine with feigned ignorance. Myra began to explain its workings to him, but he looked at his watch once more and interrupted her.

"I believe I saw one of these manipulated once before," he said. "You sit down in a chair and look up when the lights are on and the wheels begin to revolve?"

"Yes, that the idea," answered the girl. "And I'll sit down now, for the sooner we can try it the better."

"I agree with you," echoed Arthur Varney, smiling. "There's no time to lose!

And as Myra assumed an easy position in the chair, facing the great wheel, covered with its mirror planes, Varney, by another coincidence, managed to touch the right electrical connections to adjust the apparatus.

The big circle tilted forward and the wheels began to move more and more rapidly. The lights glowed and any one observing the eager Myra would have imagined that Varney was quite familiar with the mechanism.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Master's Revenge.

ALDEN, finally despairing of any new clues, looked at his watch and decided to report the strange occurrence to Myra.

He strode nervously across the uneven ground to the roadway. As he quickened his pace upon the more level thoroughfare, a small boy riding a bicycle tinkled his bell and stopped abruptly.

The youngster looked at him quizzically and then called out sharply.

"Hey, there; are you Mister Alden?"

The physician whirled about in surprise.

"Who do you want?"

"What's yer first name?" was the shrewd inquiry, by way of reply.

"Who sent you to ask for me?"

"That's my business," responded the lad. "What's your first name? I know what I got paid for."

The doctor smiled. The boy, despite his juvenile cocksureness, was the possessor of an honest grin, and Alden instinctively trusted him.

"Well, my name is Payson Alden. If you have anything to tell me don't hesitate. Here is my card," and he proffered the youngster the tiny square of pasteboard.

The boy grinned and handed him an envelope.

"A guy that looked just the same as a Chinaman—only different—he gave he that. He told me what you looked like or I wouldn't a-given it to you at that, for he gave me a dollar."

"Thanks very much," and Alden added to the boy's wealth as he nervously tore open the missive.

The message was in the familiar handwriting of his faithful Hindoo friend. Alden breathed a sigh of relief, for he had feared that perhaps Haji had been engulfed in the crumbling subterranean passageways.

"They have moved to new quarters. Meet me at noon near the overhanging willow," read the hasty script.

"Well, not long to wait then," muttered Alden, as he strode over the hillside to the appointed place.

He sat down with a wary eye in all directions. The time dragged miserably. His thoughts reverted to the beautiful girl whose fortunes had become so oddly, yet so inspiringly, entangled with his own. He wondered what might be her thoughts at this moment, and whether Myra were as warmly interested as the apparently increasing cordiality seemed to indicate.

Again he looked at his watch.

"Late! This is the first time you ever failed to keep an appointment with friend Haji!" he muttered, anxiously.

Another half hour passed.

Fears for Myra's safety began to torment him. It was cool, yet the nervous perspiration bedewed his forehead.

He walked down toward the edge of the stream, nervously tossing pebbles into it.

Then he saw it!

Floating down with the current was a half-submerged human body. Alden ran into the water a few feet and clutched at it.

He drew it to the bank and turned the corpse face upward, the bitter tears springing to his eyes.

It was faithful Haji, who had sacrificed his life in the cause of "white magic."

"Poor fellow!" he muttered, as he tested the various signs of life.

The Hindoo was stone dead.

As he tore open the shirt to examine his heart he saw a peculiar burn upon the dark-skinned breast. It was the devil worshiper's sign, oddly branded on the flesh.

How death had actually occurred was a mystery, yet the expression upon the dead man's face proved that it must have been one of horrible torture, mentally, if not physically.

"I must tell the police!" and Alden sprang to his feet and hurried to the station house.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed the captain, "I thought this business was quieted down for the day."

"Captain, I must be hurrying to the Maynard home to see if any developments have occurred there. This business is not quieting down—it is just beginning to flare up. We may expect the worst of everything from now on!"

And as the policemen rushed a patrol wagon to bear the body of the dead man to the coroner's office, Alden hurried with increasing apprehension to Myra's home.

CHAPTER XXV.

The New Astral Intrigue.

"WHERE is Miss Myra, Charles?" asked Mrs. Maynard of the chauffeur, as he brought the car to a stop before the house.

"Why, I just took her with Mr. Varney, ma'am, over to Dr. Alden's house," was the reply.

"What is she doing there?" she demanded. "I don't understand this at all."

"I don't know, ma'am," faltered Charles, scratching his head, as he tried to remember some of the things he had overheard. "Oh, yes, she said something about a laboratory, I think, ma'am."

Mrs. Maynard gave an ejaculation of alarm.

"That terrible place again! And she promised me that she would not go there again under any circumstances. Charles, as soon as I get my wraps I want you to take me right there."

Mrs. Maynard was soon speeding through the crowded streets, urging the driver to more haste. At last they reached the physician's house.

"I want to see my daughter!" she demanded, trembling with a presentiment of further trouble.

"Yes, ma'am. She's in the waiting room," replied the servant who answered the ring. "Step right in, please."

The room was empty, to the surprise of both!

"The laboratory!" cried Mrs. Maynard. "Take me to the laboratory at once. That is where she is."

"But, ma'am, the doctor never allows anyone there," objected the woman. "That's strictly against his orders. The young lady couldn't be there."

"I'm going to see just the same!" declared Mrs. Maynard, as she hurried toward the stairs.

Within the darkened laboratory Arthur Varney stood regarding the inert figure of Myra as she sat limp in the easy chair, before the revolving wheel. He heard an excited knocking at the locked door.

"Who can that be?" he muttered, as he threw his cigarette aside. "If it's the doctor——"

"Myra! Myra! Open this door!" called Mrs. Maynard.

He sprang to the levers controlling the hypnotizing machine and stopped its motion.

"Myra! Myra! Arthur Varney, let me in!"

Varney looked exultingly at the girl, and then rumpling his hair and taking off his coat, he went to the door.

"Arthur! What do you mean?' began Mrs. Maynard, as he swung the door open.

She caught a glimpse of the still figure in the chair and gave a piercing scream.

"What are you doing to my daughter?" she cried. "Myra! Myra!"

The girl's eyes were closed, her head rigid, her fingers tensely gripping the arms of the chair.

Mrs. Maynard clutched the cold hand, and burst into helpless sobbing. The girl's face was more tense, more pallied than during that earlier hypnotic seance.

"Oh, she's dying!" moaned Mrs. Maynard. "Why did you let her do this, Arthur? You, her friend, my friend?"

Varney rubbed his forehead in assumed desperation.

"I've tried every way!" he said, "I'm not able to wake her up. She said she wanted to be hypnotized and she turned on the machine itself. Why, it nearly affected me!"

The girl's mother sobbed, while the frightened maid servant ran down the stairs, to escape from the terrors of this eerie room.

The unconscious girl's lips twitched in mute echo of some spiritual suffering.

"Oh, she's in agony," murmured Mrs. Maynard. "If we could only reach Dr. Alden"

Arthur Varney shook his head with an ill-concealed leer

"I think he is otherwise engaged by this time!" he remarked calmly. "We'll just have to wait for developments, I'm afraid, my dear Mrs. Maynard.

Dr. Payson Alden was indeed otherwise engaged, but in a far more animated manner than Varney supposed.

The physician had reached the Maynard home in a taxicab. He ran up the steps eagerly, hoping that Myra would greet him. But it was Willis' anxious countenance which appeared at the door.

"Miss Maynard?"

"Sorry, sir, but I thought she was with you, sir. She went over to your house, with Mr. Varney. She said something about your laboratory, so Mrs. Maynard told me, sir."

Alden's eyes opened wide. This was the biggest surprise of the day, Myra and Arthur Varney going to his laboratory, when he was confident that the girl knew he was not there!

"What! Am I crazy or is she?" he exclaimed.

"I'm sorry, sir, I don't know, sir!" apologized Willis, with an embarrassed cough.

"Well, there's only one thing to do!" And with the words, Alden ran down the steps. He was just in time to catch the departing taxicab, and he ordered the driver to make speed.

The machine whizzed up to the house, and Alden sprang out, tossing the man a yellow-backed bill, without waiting for change. Into the house he sped, using his latch kep, and straight up the stairs.

As he reached the upper floor, he paused outside his laboratory door, as a precaution. He heard the oily accents of Arthur Varney.

"I tell you it won't do any good to start the machine again, Mrs. Maynard. We must just wait and see what happens!"

"Then I'll start it myself!" cried the good lady, tearfully. "If Dr. Alden could only be reached."

"Well, he can't be reached. And I doubt if the fool could understand the case, anyway," was the impatient retort.

Alden stepped into the room, his eyes blazing.

"I understand more than you think I do, Varney," he snapped, as he ran to the girl's side. The astonished interloper stepped back as though he were expecting a blow.

But Alden had his mind on only one thing. He knelt by the girl's side and began to manipulate her wrists.

Then, this failing to bring results, he commanded, begged, and almost shouted an order for her to "Wake up!" It amounted to naught.

Little did Mrs. Maynard and the doctor dream as they worked over the unconscious girl that at this very moment her astral and that of the dread Black Master could be seen floating hand in hand in the clouds of incense which swirled above the altar of the Devil Worshipers.

Even Varney, ignorant of the full extent of his villainy, was not aware that a strange transposition of souls was taking place and that when Myra awoke it would be with the spirit of another animating her body.

"If the machine made her go away, it ought to make her come back," persisted Mrs. Maynard. "Oh, doctor, try anything, please, for poor little Myra's sake."

The physician walked to the levers. His keen eye noted the butts of some cigarettes on the floor beside it. Even in that preoccupied moment he realized that Varney must have been slow in the hypnotic work to have had time for smoking three!

"Why not run the machine backward? Maybe that will reverse the action," ventured Mrs. Maynard.

Alden was about to turn the advice aside, when something prompted him to follow it.

The lights were soon glittering once more in the whirring reflectors. The trio watched the unconscious face with varying emotions. Suddenly the eyelids stirred, and were lifted, ever so weakly.

"Hurrah!" cried Alden. "Mrs. Maynard, you've made a great psychic discovery!"

"I don't care about that," cried the mother, kissing the wan face. "All I want is my daughter back!"

"She's back!" exclaimed Varney, and there was disappointment on his astonished features.

Myra stirred and now looked at her mother, with a strange expression.

"Myra, darling, don't you know me, child?" cried Mrs. Maynard, fearfully.

"Yes, it's mother! Isn't it?"

Alden was puzzled at the speech, and even at the curious stiffness of her tones.

"Myra, come out of this dreadful place. You must come home at once."

Varney put on his coat, and picked up his hat and walking stick. He cast a sullen glare at Alden, who was studying him with fingers which itched for a grip upon that comfortable, heavy neck.

"Yes, I think she had better go home and rest. And you two had better go home alone together Mrs. Maynard," said the doctor.

"No, no, I don't think of their going without an escort," objected Varney.

"Very well: I will be in the posse, then," observed the physician. There was a grim set to his lips as he followed the group downstairs and into the automobile.

Alden was watching Myra with a shade of misgiving, which he could not quite crystallize into a definite suspicion.

"She walks oddly," he mused, as though she were not used to that skirt."

When Myra stepped into the car she tripped over the border of her gown, and would have fallen backward had not Varney caught her arm.

"I'm so clumsy," she laughed, with embarrassment. "My head still aches."

Alden sat bisde Myra.

"What did you see, Miss Maynard, while you were in the trance?" he asked.

The girl looked at him with a puzzling laugh in the blue eyes.

"Not a thing!"

"Um-m!" muttered Alden, thoughtfully, and made no further comment, until they reached home.

Varney escorted Mrs. Maynard into the library, while Myra paused in the vestibule, to allow Alden to lift her cloak from her shoulders.

Suddenly the girl turned toward the physician and with face upturned to him, put her hands upon his shoulders.

With a languorous look in her eyes—an expression absolutely foreign to every memory of those unusually demure depths—the girl spoke in a low tone:

"I love you!"

Alden stepped back in astonishment, and then the meaning of the sudden declaration overwhelmed him.

"Miss—Myra—what—do—you say?" he asked, bewildered.

"I love you, Payson."

The girl raised her lips coquettishly. She clasped her arms behind his shoulders, as their lips met. Alden was facing the mirror of the antique mahogany hat tree, as they stood there. The supreme moment of bliss—the first kiss—seemed disappointing to him somehow. He looked over her shoulder and say their two figures reflected in the mirror.

It was not the face of Myra Maynard which lay upon his shoulder.

Even as his lips brushed the glorious hair, he saw the face of a man.

It was the sardonic, crime-gnarled visage of the Master of the Black Order!

The slim white hands were gliding behind his shoulders toward the revolver which protruded from his hip pocket. Petrified with horror, the physician groped mentally.

In that instant the revolver was snatched, and the muzzle pressed against his back.

Alden sprang aside and grasped the slender wrist.

The report of the shot, which shattered the mirror, brought Varney and Mrs. Maynard into the vestibule.

The face of the girl was dove-like in its innocence and gentle surprise.

"What is it?" cried Varney.

"Why did you fire that revolver?" demanded Mrs. Maynard.

Alden was holding the revolver. From its muzzle still trailed a thin line of smoke. He looked at the weapon which he snatched away so opportunely.

"Miss Maynard tried to kill me!" he cried, hardly hearing them, as he stared into the girl's eyes.

Myra shook her head and looked pityingly, almost scornfully, at the physician.

"Poor Dr. Alden," she murmured, with a laugh. "He is so upset. We mustn't pay any attention to what he says.

A great light burst into the mystified mind of the physician.

"It is not Myra's fault! She did not try to kill me."

"Of course not," said the girl. "Dr. Alden, you will begin to bore me before long, I am afraid."

"You are not Myra" cried the physician, pointing an accusing finger, which trembled with emotion. "The soul of the master of the Black Order has entered Myra Maynard's body!"

The girl laughed and Varney turned to follow her mother as the two women went into the drawing room. Alden stared after them, a thousand terrifying fears for the real Myra whirring through his brain!

(To be continued next Sunday.)

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The Mysteries of Myra An Inspiring Novel and Motion Picture Drama

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Dramatized by Charles W. Goddard.

(Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.)

Myra Maynard, a beautiful heiress, persecuted by a mysterious band of devil-worshippers known as the Black Order, and ruled by a cunning genius called the High Master, is on the verge of suicide while in a somnambulistic trance, when she is saved by Dr. Payson Alden, a brilliant young physician, who has devoted his life to investigations of the psychic. Alden has learned through his studies of the plot to kill the girl in order that her fortune may revert, by a secret will of her father, to the Black Order, of which he was a covert member. His efforts to protect her are continually endangered by the work of Arthur Varney, the suitor favored by Myra's mother, who is in league with the High Master. By clever finessing against the knaveries of the evil order, Alden has managed to apply the modern discoveries in hypnotism, mind reading, electricity, chemistry and spiritualism in such a way as to thwart their plans.

The first attempt on the girl's life having failed, the High Master and his aides endeavor to slay the girl by cutting the "astral chord," during a seance in which the girl's soul, under hypnotic influence of Alden, is being projected to search in the ether world for the evildoers. The power of prayer saves her life when science fails. A poisonous Oriental flower is sent to her bedchamber, but Alden saves her at the bare escape from death himself. Balloons filled with deadly vapors are shrewdly smuggled into her room, but after escaping from the clutches of the Black Order, who have imprisoned him, the doctor rescues Myra once more. With the aid of a fellow investigator, Haji the Hindoo, Payson Alden discovers the lair of the devil-worshipers and escapes from them at the cost of his friend's life. After trying vainly to set the police on the trail of the scoundrels, Alden finds the entire network of underground meeting rooms dynamited by the criminals.

He returns to Myra's home to learn that at the suggestion of Arthur Varney she has gone to the physician's laboratory. There she has used Alden's automatic hypnotizing machine to project her astral to search for the physician whom Varney has reported slain. After a tremendous effort Alden and Mrs. Maynard succeed in bringing life to the body of the unconscious girl. Upon her return to the Maynard mansion Alden sees, in the reflection of a mirror, the face of the High Master, instead of that of the girl whom he has learned to love. He prevents her from shooting him with his own revolver, and declares to the incredulous mother that the soul of the great criminal has taken possession of Myra's body.

CHAPTER XXIX.
The Surprising Myra.

IT was a changed girl who greeted Mrs. Maynard the next morning at breakfast. Instead of the usual good morning kiss from the rosebud mouth the tender caress of the gentle arms about her mother's shoulders, a cynical smile appeared which disturbed Mrs. Maynard more than she was willing to admit.

"How do you feel, dear?" was her question. "Yesterday was a terrible day, Myra, and I do hope that you are feeling stronger now."

"I never felt finer in my life. Where's the food?"

The girl looked at her mother to see a look of bewilderment on her face. This was not her usual manner of talking. As Willis, the butler, entered the dining room he seemed to sense something unusual.

"Hurry up there, you fool," was Myra's next remark. "I'm hungry as a wolf."

"Yes—yes, Miss!" and Willis stepped forward with forced alacrity. He awkwardly dropped a roll from his tray. The sharp blue eyes missed nothing.

"Stupid idiot! What sort of a hash house did you learn your trade in?" cried the girl.

"Why Myra, dear, I never heard you talk like that before," objected the astounded Mrs. Maynard. "You must have passed a dreadful night, but that should not alter your politeness."

The big eyes narrowed as with sudden realization.

"I'm so sorry, dear mother. I did not mean to be irritable. I have, indeed, been unhappy all night. This stupid Dr. Alden is getting on my nerves, I presume. I certainly want him to stay away from the huose from now on. If he telephones or tries to call just tell him that I am not at home to him."

Myra began to eat with a startling eagerness. Her mother was surprised, then pleased; for the girl was usually a very light eater.

"Well, you are a naughty girl," she said, when the servant had gone to the kitchen for the next course, "but you must control your nerves. I am going shopping today, and I wish that you would take a complete rest."

Myra looked up thoughtfully.

"Yes, dear. A good idea. I may go downtown later myself. And by the way, where did I leave my bankbooks? I am so forgetful nowadays."

"Why, in the library table drawer, of course. Really, my dear, I do not understand you this morning."

The meal was completed in silence. Myra seemed busy with her own thoughts, until the telephone bell tinkled from the adjacent library.

The butler hurried out of the room and returned with a queer expression on his usually placed face. Myra did not overlook it.

"A gentleman wants to speak to you, Mrs. Maynard. He says it is very important and that he insists on your answering the telephone at once, ma'am."

"Who was talking?" insisted the girl.

"I don't know, Miss!" faltered the servant.

Mrs. Maynard walked into the other room, as Myra directed a malevolent glance at the unfortunate Willis.

"You are a liar!" were her surprising words, and Willis beat a decorous retreat.

Mrs. Maynard took up the instrument, apprehensively. Then she showed greater surprise.

"Why, it is Dr. Alden! Willis said that he didn't recognize your voice; that's strange—he certainly should by time."

She looked askance at Myra, whose face was wreathed in smiles for the instant, only to change to a scowl as her mother turned toward the telephone again.

The words of the physician, over the wire, caused further bewilderment to the good lady.

"Mrs. Maynard, don't talk for a minute. Don't say a thing at that end of the phone until you get my warning. That is not your daughter! Listen, now—there has been a great psychic crime committed! It is the spirit of a strange and wicked man which looks at you out of Myra's eyes. Beware!"

Mrs. Maynard sniffed.

"Dr. Alden, I believe you are losing your senses. You speak ridiculously. I believe you are crazy and I do not wish to talk with you any more. Good-by!"

And she hung up the receiver with a jerk.

"More of Alden's foolishness?" asked Myra, eagerly.

"Yes, but I don't believe it," replied her mother with vague uncertainty in her voice. She rose to leave the room.

"What did he say, dear? There's no reason why you shouldn't tell me," persuaded the girl.

"Nothing important, Myra. Nothing worth bothering you about; you have had your ears filled with enough of this nonsense already." Her mother walked out, leaving the girl standing with clenched hands and a demoniac expression of rage on her smooth oval features.

"Well, it is time to get busy at once, or that fool will spoil everything," muttered the girl as she turned toward the library table.

It took but an instant to bring forth the bankbooks which were within. She lifted up the first—it was her mother's. She tossed this aside with a look of regret. The next one was in the name of Myra Maynard—it showed a big balance of credit.

She hurried around the table to the telephone and in another moment was talking to the bookkeeper at the bank.

"How does my account stand, please? This is Myra Maynard speaking."

"Oh, yes, I recognize your voice, Miss Maynard. A pleasant day, isn't it? Well, just a minute and I'll look it up to see how your checks are coming in."

There was a silence, after which the agreeable voice of the bank attendant came back over the wire.

"Miss Maynard, your bank balance to date is just $2,500. Is there anything more I can do for you?"

"Not now, thank you. Good-by," and the girl hung up the receiver.

She turned to the drawer again, rummaging about until she found the check book. She drew out one of the blanks, and another search brought forth some canceled checks. She filled out the blank for the sum of $2,500, payable to "Cash," and then, after a moment's hesitation, began to copy her own signature from the bottom of an older check!

Just as this was laborously completed and blotted, Myra's pet dog came racing into the room with wagging tail. As the animal came near her he suddenly stopped. The hair rose stiffly on his neck, and he began to growl, as he retreated toward the door.

"Come here," called the girl, nervously.

But the dog began to bark furiously, showing his white teeth menacingly. Myra's hand went to a book, as a weapon, just as Willis rushehd into the room.

"I don't think he likes you any more, Miss Myra," observed the servant, catching the animal by his collar.

"Well, there's no love lost, then, for I don't like dogs," was the surprising response. "Take him out of the room, and keep him out."

CHAPTER XXX.
The Betrothal.

AS she entered her boudoir her cat arose from the seat of the armchair by the window, where it had been sunning itself. Its black back was arched and it began to spit. The girl approached it, with a hand outstretched to caress it, but the animal sprang wildly out of the chair, scuttling through the door to the corridor!

Myra Maynard laughed, as she turned toward her dresser and began to rummage through the drawers for a jewel box. There was a strange look of greedy joy on her face as she slipped the dinner rings on her fingers, placed a bracelet, set with diamonds, on her slim wrist, and pinned on two brooches. A sparkling lavalliere was slipped about her neck, and two pendants were put in the pocket of her heavy street coat.

The girl lifted her handbag, opened it with clumsy fingers, and placed a jeweled watch inside, as well as the folded check. Then she awkwardly donned the coat, man-fashion, buttoning it the wrong way!

Her hat was the next difficulty. This she put on at several angles, after apparently giving up hope about the identity of front or back!

While she was thus engaged, the doorbell rang. Dr. Payson Alden, alighting from a taxicab, had rushed into the vestibule breathlessly.

"Mrs. Maynard, I must speak to you at once," he cried.

"Doctor, you offend me with your remarks," began Myra's mother, but the physician stopped her impetuously:

"But, I must tell you. In Heaven's name, believe me! Myra's spirit is gone and in its place—"

"That is ridiculous. We have had enough of this buffoonery," declared Mrs. Maynard in disgust. "I must ask you to leave, Mr. Alden."

Unseen by Alden, Myra had slipped down to the broad stairway to eavesdrop outside the door. Her face was twisted in an ugly, unfamiliar snarl, while her hands clenched in rage.

Before the doctor could continue, another visitor rang the doorbell. It was Arthur Varmey!

Debonair, suave, and self-confident as usual, he stepped into the vestibule with a look of well-bred surprise at the evident perturbation of the physician.

"Why, good morning, everyone! Nothing wrong, I trust," he began.

"Step into the music room, Arthur. I am bidding good-by to Dr. Alden," said Mrs. Maynard. The physician waited until his rival had passed out of earshot. He did not se the surprise on Varney's face as he found the girl listening on the other side of the closed door. She shut it hastily and bade him join her eavesdropping!

"I beg of you to believe me, Mrs. Maynard," the doctor continued. "I have tried so hard to save her, as you know."

"Good morning, Doctor Alden!" was the cold response.

"Oh, you are her mother. Won't you help me? Mrs. Maynard, I—I—love her!"

The door of the music room opened, and Myra Maynard emerged, leading Varney by the arm.

Alden looked at her as though he were seeing a ghost. As he drew back in alarm, Myra spoke:

"Mother, Arthur and I are engaged to be married!"

Even Varney showed his surprise, as he looked into the girl's eyes, and then at the other two. Mrs. Maynard clasped her hands nervously, and then tried to laugh.

"You are joking, my dear. You have not spoken of this to me before," she faltered.

"I won't permit this crime!" cried Alden, tense with fury. "This is not Myra herself, and you know it!"

Varney stepped in between the raging physician and the girl with outstretched arm.

"How dare you intrude?" he demanded. "I am engaged to Miss Myra Maynard, and I order you to leave this house before the servants put you out! If you don't I'll throw you out bodily!"

Alden's head drooped as he turned away. With one miserable look at the triumphant faces of Myra and Varney, he left the house, walking down the steps like an old man.

Myra smiled at Varney, who impulsively threw his arms about her. At last he had won his goal! Despite the cleverness of the astounding physician the work of months was success.

He leaned forward to claim the first kiss of their betrothal. But as he did so a surprising slap on the cheek greeted him.

"Oh Myra!" he cried, in an aggrieved tone. "You never treated me this way before. What has come over you, my dear—in this, the happiest minute of my life?"

"You fool!" an dthe girl's voice was oddly suggestive of another's that he remembered, despite the feminine quality. "You idiot, don't you know me? I'm the High Master!"

The girl, or as it really was the incarnation of the criminal genius of the Black Order, raised clenched hands to her cheeks with thumbs upturned on either side of the clustering blonde curls.

At this symbol of the devil-worshippers and the unmistakable manner of his superior, the startled Varney stepped back with fallen jaw. He dropped instinctively to his knees and gave the answering sign, his face awe-lit.

"Get up now before that woman comes back!" comanded the Master's spirit.

"Yes, Myra. I mean, Master!"

Varney was struggling to divine it all, but he groped clumsily, as he stared at the transformed face of the girl he loved.

How surprisingly hawk-like had become the usually gentle glance of those blue eyes. The rosebud lips were drawn to a firm, cruel line of tyrannical dominion, as the evil one continued.

"I have substituted the spirits of our astrals. My own body is in the meeting chamber. Myra Maynard's soul is imprisoned within it. This confounded Payson Alden guessed the truth too quickly. You must hurry to the place at once. Take my body to the house in the gorge—you know where. Not a sign of suspicion that all is not well here, understand—or you will pay as Haji did!"

Varney dropped his glance and nodded obediently, as "Myra" caught Varney's hand tenderly.

"I must be going, my dear, for there's a little errand I must perform at a certain jeweler's! Good morning, Mrs. Maynard. You haven't given me your blessing yet."

"This has taken me by surprise,' said Mrs. Maynard tearfully. "I hardly know what to say, Arthur. But I trust Mra's judgment, and I know that you will be good to her."

"At last, Dr. Alden knows the truth, and has something to think about," observed "Myra," with a wink at Varney, who could not resist a smile at the double truth.

"Good-by, then. I'll be back later."

And not knowing whether to be happy or miserable, Varney went down the steps with a backward wave of his hand at the two women.

Mrs. Maynard was studying her daughter's face and suddenly looked up, in alarm, at her hat.

"My dear! What has come over you? You have your hat on backward, and your coat is buttoned wrong! I never saw you so untidy before."

"Just help me fix it, dear. I am so happy this morning," "Myra" laughed, "that I didn't stop to worry about little things. I'm going down to the shops to buy some little things for my trousseau."

"I'll go with you, as every mother should," but "Myra" intercepted with a pretty shake of the head.

"Not this time, dear. I want to surprise you with my good taste. I wish you would have the butler order a taxicab, so that I can go right away. We're wasting the whole morning with this sentimental foolishness," said the "girl."

Her mother shook her head in turn.

"I cannot understand you. Why should you want a taxicab when our own car is all ready? Where are your wits, my dear?"

"Oh, yes. I forgot about having a car," was the surprising reply.

Once at the bank, where the chauffeur had gone according to a curt direction, "Myra" left the car. "She" walked hesitatingly to the paying teller's wicket.

"Good morning, Miss Maynard."

"Good morning. Please cash this check, as I am in a hurry to do some shopping."

The paying teller took the slip of paper, then looked up startled. He had already reached for a large pile of bills, when he turned to the girl again.

"Miss Maynard, this does not look like your signature at all," he said, slowly.

"It is my signature. I want none of your opinions. Don't you know who I am? Hurry up."

"But Miss Maynard, I am only exerting the caution which I am paid for. This certainly isn't your signature."

"I am going to patronize another bank hereafter!" was the angry response of the "girl." A well dressed man, hatless, and evidently an official of the bank, was passing. He stopped at these surprising words, and then stepped forward.

"Why, Miss Maynard, what is the trouble?" he began, apologetically.

"The teller refuses to honor my signature," she began, sweetly, but the manager soon ended the difficulty by promptly O. K.ing the check. "Myra" murmured her thanks as the dumfounded clerk handed the money through the window. "She" bowed and walked to the safe deposit vaults, leaving the two men in a heated discussion by the wicket.

"Good morning," was "her" greeting there. "I have forgotten the number of my box. But I have the key. Will you please show it to me?"

"Certainly, Miss Maynard," and the attendant, after consulting his record book, walked ahead of her into the armor-plate safe room and opened the lock of her private box, with his own master key and one from the bunch which she handed him.

"Myra" drew out the metal box, retiring to one of the individual coupon rooms at the side. Alone here, "she" greedily lifted the cover and smiled at the jewelry which sparkled from within.

This safely changed to the handbag, the "girl" returned the box to its place, and with a more than usually amiable smile returned to the waiting car outside.

"I think I'll walk for a while. Tell mother that I will stay downtown for luncheon and not to worry about me," were the parting orders. "You can go home now."

VARNEY WAS WARNED BY JEAN

CHAPTER XXXI.
A Soul In Jeopardy.

WITHIN the somber surroundings of the Black Order's secret headquarters there was a strange unrest. In the main council room a group of the members were talking excitedly, but in subdued voices, with the leader of ceremonies.

"What has happened to the Master?" they demanded. "He has not told us what to do today, although yesterday he commanded that we come early for the day's labors."

"I dare not go inside without his command," replied the leader. "He strictly forbade doing that."

Just then the face of the High Master appeared through the black velvet curtains. He gazed fearsomely about him, and then with a strange, inarticulate cry, disappeared!

"Did you see that?" exclaimed one of the brethren, as they all fell to their knees.

"The Master has never before shown himself in this outer chamber! What can it mean, my brothers?" the leader demanded. "It bodes ill for us."

Before they could discuss it further, the Master's face reappeared. The men fell to their knees once more in the posture of adoration according to their ritual. Now, stranger still, he walked out among them as they tremblingly prostrated themselves.

Had any of them been looking upward a surprising expression might have been noticeable upon the face of the ruler. A gentler, softer look was upon the drawn features; his stride was uncertain, even effeminate, and he looked about him with a half frightened air.

The "Master" strode toward the incense tripod and knocked it over. The members cried in fear at this strange sacrilege.

Without a word the "Master" rushed toward the stone bull which stood upon the altar and knocked it crashing to the stone floor. The brothers crawled back toward the black hung walls in horror.

The "Master" sprang toward a great sword suspended near the altar, and with it began to scrape away at the weird symbols of the devil-worshiper's pentagram, which was painted on the floor.

"Oh, Master, spare that!" cried the leader of ceremonies.

"Oh, master, you know not what you do!" pleaded another kneeling member, with outstretched hands.

The "master" turned angrily, and with a threatening wave of the sword, cried:

"Begone! Every one of you! Get out of here!"

At the words they turned and fled through the secret entrance, leaving the "master" alone—and now more puzzled than ever. "He" looked down at the strange hands, and at the unfamiliar body.

"What can it all mean? What can it all mean?" and the unfortunate in panic tried to open the secret door. But it could not be done!

Outside, the members were buzzing in perplexed fashion as they picked their way along a creek bed toward an old mill which stood some distance up the stream. They were completely at a loss to understand the proceedings until Arthur Varney came running up to them and in a few breathless words explained the situation. At his suggestion they returned to the secret meeting place.

The outer room was empty. Suddenly a voice came from behind the curtains; they noiselessly approached the arras to peer within.

The body of the master was seated in the black carved chair talking excitedly over the telephone. The voice was tremulous with fear. "Oh, Dr. Alden, save me! It is Myra! It is Myra! But now I seem to be a man—a horrible man!"

Varney and his associates ran forward, to snatch away the instrument and quickly subdue the weak body.

"Quick, bind him—I mean her—and follow me," directed Varney, exultantly. And his command was obeyed with a cruelty which brought forth piteous moans.

CHAPTER XXXII.
The Warning of the Spirit.

"WHAT on earth can that mean? Why was it cut off? Why can't I find out the location of that telephone? Oh, it is terrible!" and Dr. Payson Alden strode excitedly up and down the floor of his laboratory.

His companion, sitting in a reclining chair in the darkened room, interrupted mildly:

"You broke into our seance, doctor, just as I was getting into the sensitive state. Be patient, for the sake of the girl. Here—I feel the call even now."

Alden impatiently paused, and then studied the face of this medium sent by one of his friends. The man, with eyes closed and hands tensely clutching the arm of the chair, was evidently undergoing some grilling mental strain. He groaned, and breathed hard, as his body writhed in apparent physical agony.

"The spirit of a Hindoo wishes to speak to you—it is a matter of life and death," said the medium. Alden leaned forward alertly, but it was many minutes before another syllable crossed the medium's lips.

At last the sensitive spoke again.

"The Hindoo says that he is your friend. He warns you to go to the house in the gorge quick! quick! quick!"

"What else? Tell me, what more did he say?" Alden demanded anxiously.

"Nothing that I can remember. He is gone."

"Then I must be going too. 'The house in the gorge'—where can that be, I wonder. Oh, yes, I do remember a place, outside the city, where I used to collect specimens years ago. It was not far from where they used the dynamite. I will get a machine and go. Come and see me again soon. I must hurry."

With the words the doctor snatched up his revolver from his desk and slipped it into his pocket. A hasty handshake and he dashed from the room to hail a passing taxicab.

It was a tedious and nerve-racking ride to the distant gorge. Alden was tortured by a thousand grewsome fears which he realized were only too well grounded. Finally the doctor signalled the chauffeur to stop.

"Will you go with me? I need help," he asked.

"Not me, governor," responded the driver, "I stay with me car."

"Very well then. Here is your fare," and Alden paid the man. "But wait here, after you turn your machine about, for I will have another passenger with me for the trip back to town—I hope."

The man touched his cap, and the physician strode into the underbrush and down a steep declivity, his revolver in hand. After several minutes' cautious advance he approached a dilapidated old frame house, standing on a ledge of rock.

The stream which flowed beside it, in a precipitous, rock-ribbed gorge resembling in a miniature way the Grand Canyon of Colorado, came from a waterfall about seventy-five feet high. Above this fall, as Alden now remembered, was a small natural dam which formed a considerable lake.

The only substantial portion of the weather-beaten structure seemed to be a strange stone chimney which was built at one end of the house, and which rose close to a higher ledge of the steep walls of the gorge.

Alden rushed for the door of the house, which swung open at his touch. Within the barren room, containing as furniture only two chairs and a wooden table, he beheld a startling scene.

In one of the chairs lay the body of Myra Maynard, bound with heavy ropes from the waist to the ankles. In another lay the unconscious figure of the high master of the Black Order! He was free from bonds entirely. The physician was mystified and ran forward to cut the ropes about the supposed Myra.

Before the girl's face hung a curious arrangement—a small hand mirror, suspended from a beam in the ceiling by a long piece of twine, and spinning as it swung. The leer on the girl's face warned him that the transportation of souls still held sway.

He pointed his weapon at the incarnation of the criminal, to be greeted by a sarcastic laugh.

"If you kill my body over there, Myra Maynard's spirit will be lost forever, Dr. Alden. If you kill her body you are guilty of murdering a young girl, and it will be impossible for her to ever come to this life again in it. You are a clever man, Dr. Payson Alden, but today the game is checkmate" jeered his enemy.

"But, if you give your word not to shoot I will permit her spirit to return to her. For I have won the game, and I prefer my own body in which to enjoy it in!" added the real high master with a cunning smile.

This was better than the present situation, although Alden knew it contained a hidden ruse.

"Go ahead! I see you are working a hypnotizing machine with the mirror. But I will shoot you if you try to escape!" answered the physician.

The enemy twirled the mirror again, gazing steadfastly into it. At the same time Alden noticed the ornate display of jewels. He saw the handbag on the table, and guessed its contents, and the purpose of the evil genius. As the hypnotism took its cataleptic hold, he quietly reached forward and tucked the handbag into his own inside coat pocket. The doctor was a physical as well as a psychical detective, in this, as in many other instances.

Suddenly the figure of the master stirred, the eyes opened and the cruel face smiled shrewdly. The girl's body was still unconscious. Alden ran toward the doorway and blocked it with the table. He covered the master now with his weapon.

"Try to escape and I'll blow your brains out!" he commanded. "You are my prisoner now!"

The master chuckled and edged toward the window, which was palpably too small for his body to pass through. Alden, sure of this, stooped over Myra, to cut the ropes, not noticing the wave of a handkerchief as a signal to some one outside.

There was a sudden, tremendous, shattering report, as a rain of rocks showered down upon the roof of the old house from the ledge of the waterfall above.

"What was that?" demanded the physician, trying vainly to awaken the girl from a mysterious stupor.

The high master chuckled, but shook his head with a pretense of ignorance.

"I suppose they are blasting somewhere. That's all I know, except that you are apt to be disappointed. * * * Listen, what is that sound?"

As he spoke, he pointed toward the window, and Alden glanced in that direction, his revolver still held ready for defense.

He saw an appalling sight. A mountain of water was rushing upon them from the waterfall! Already it was beginning to seep through the door, across the floor.

The physician realized that here, indeed, was a death trap; that the dam had been destroyed by some of the Black Order confederates, and that drowning had been the planned doom for the unfortunate girl as soon as the master could retranspose his soul!

The cunning horror of it all was plain to the physician, whose thoughts were flashing with the kaleidoscopic speed that is engendered in the last few seconds before death.

He looked about. The only door was barricaded, and was facing the direction of the impending flood. There was no escape!

"Myra, Myra! Wake up!" he cried, shaking her roughly.

The High Master stood regarding him with arms folded and a look of calm satisfaction.

"Ah, it is a pleasure to enjoy the fruits of victory—a double finish of triumph, I should call it!" he said.

Alden had caught the girl's limp body over his left arm, and now he pointed the revolver at the scoundrel who exulted so cold-bloodedly.

"Well, I am going to make a triple finish of it," he snapped out.

But before he could pull the trigger of the revolver nature's great power seemed to come to the assistance of the demoniac plotter. There was a crashing over head! The mass of water burst in through the sagging wooden walls.

Alden caught the body of the women he loved closer to his breast. At least it was sweet to be able to die with her, he thought.

There was a pandemonium of ripping, banging boards and falling planks, with showers of wet plaster. One beam struck his head, and he was dazed for an instant.

When he looked up again the Master had disappeared, as though by a continuance of his evil magic.

Alden strove to hold his footing. He sprang toward the table and forced his way past it, holding Myra closer than ever before.

The swirl of the waters caught him up and half submerged him, but he valiantly managed to hold the girl's head above the current.

He caught one glimpse of the great stone chimney, and it flashed on him how the villainous Master had disappeared. Even at that instant he was emerging from the top of it and being dragged to safety by two confederates.

On, on, the mighty current dragged them, but Alden managed to swim to the solid ground and pull the bedraggled girl to safety. The cold shock of the water had accomplished more than his own earlier efforts, for now she opened the blue eyes.

"Thank God! Oh, Myra, Myra!"

This was all he could say, as he showered the wet hands with impetuous kisses.

Myra did not restrain him. Her glance reflected the kindling glow of his own, as she strove to stand upright.

"Look," she cried. "Look, it is that man again!"

There are on the jutting ledge above them were three men. In the center was the Master. His thumbs went up, with clenched fist on either side of his cheeks, in the devil worshippers' symbol. It was the threat of continued malevolence and future dangers!

A thrill or horror shot through Alden and Myra as they stood there ankle deep in water. Alden, with a muttered imprecation, whipped out his revolver and fired. The three men promptly disappeared.

They did not come to view again, although he watched for several minutes. Then Alden and the girl began to pick their way over the rugged bank, to make a slow and laborious ascent further down the stream. It was near where Payson Alden had entered the thicket, and he breathed a sigh of gratitude to see the patient chauffeur still waiting for him.

"Great Scott, governor, wot you been doing? Out on a surf bathing party?" asked the surprised chauffeur as Alden helped Myra into the car.

"No, nothing but a little accident," he replied. "Hustle us home now. We're cold and might get warmed up if you burned up the road."

As they rode along Alden learned from Myra as much as she could remember, which was precious little. He told her of his own strange discovery of the lost trail. When he brought forth her handbag, she opened it to find her jewels and the $2,500 in cash within.

"How on earth could that have got there?" she exclaimed. "Why, these were in my safe deposit box. And this money?"

"I believe that the leader of the Black Magicians endeavored to do some high financing before he changed back to his own body. A telephone message to your bank will explain what happened. Did you know that you accepted Arthur Varney's proposal of marriage this morning?"

The girl looked at him with horror. Then she began to cry.

"Oh, Doctor Alden, I wish this terrible man had succeeded, for I would rather be dead than"——

Then she buried her face in her hands and sobbed wretchedly until the sight of her anxious mother at the front door forced her to a semblance of calm.

"We must keep most of this from poor, dear mother, for she has already had her cup of sorrow. I don't know how I can ever straighten out this angle. There was never a more miserable girl in the world than I!"

And then she and the physician spent an unpleasant half hour relating to Mrs. Maynard a logical—and untruthful—series of episodes to account for their condition.

Alden's heart was sad as he finally left them. He knew now that the grip of the Black Order was tightening. He cursed his own stupidity for not having shot the scoundrel in cold blood when he had the chance. But regrets were vain, and he engrossed himself at once on some new investigations in the laboratory.

Payson Alden was not a quitter, in danger—or love!

To Be Continued Next Sunday.

See it today at the Hippodrome,
9th and N. Y. Ave.—Advt.

IT'S EITHER DANDRUFF OR HAIR

You Can't Have Both for Long.

Look at your coat collar. If it shows evidence of dandruff you can take it as a sure sign of coming baldness unless you take steps to prevent it.

When the hair threatens to leave you can't afford to take any chances. Go to O'Donnell's Drug Store, 904 F Street, and ask for a 50c bottle of Speiser's Scalp Tonic. Use it according to directions, and in a reasonable time dandruff, falling hair and irritations of the scalp and skin will disappear and the growth of the hair will be promoted. Mr. O'Donnell is so certain of the merits of Speiser's Scalp Tonic that he'll gladly refund your money if it fails.

Avoid preparations containing alkalis (the presence of alkali is made known by the foaming of the liquid) or cocoanut oil. Be on the safe side—use Speiser's Scalp Tonic only.—Advt.

The Mysteries of Myra An Inspiring Novel and Motion Picture Drama

Written by Hereward Carrington.

Dramatized by Charles W. Goddard.

Synopsis of Previous Chapters.

Myra Maynard, a beautiful heiress, is the victim of a band of devil-worshippers, known as the "Black Order." Ruled by a criminal genius, called the "High Master," they are persistent in their efforts to cause her death in order to obtain the fortune which, according to a secret will made by Myra's father, a former member of their society, is theirs in case his daughter should not live until reaching legal age. Dr. Payson Alden, a physician, who has devoted years of study to the occult, becomes aware of their villainies and uses all his knowledge to protect Myra. Thus far he has succeeded in thwarting their many plans, despite the connivance of Arthur Varney, a wealthy clubman, who is secretly a member of the "Black Order."

The High Master of the society finally manages to substitute his own soul for that of the girl. He returns, in the spirit, to Myra's body and endeavors to kill the friendly physician. Myra's soul is imprisoned in the body of the crafty leader of the "Black Order," to be made helpless by his directions. Dr. Alden, the only one to realize the truth, fights the High Master with his own weapons and manages to force the evil leader to make the substitution so that the girl can return to her own body.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Mistaken Intervention.

NEXT morning the determined physician was the earliest visitor at Myra's home.

"We have come closer and closer to the mystery," he declared, "and now I am prepared to end this whole horrible affair as it should be ended."

Myra nodded, but her mother interrupted.

"Dr. Alden, at first I was indignant at your intercession, then skeptical, but now I realize that you have been right," she said. "Yet every time you have tried to fight these unknown people you have involved Myra in greater danger. Wouldn't it be wiser to call a truce with them?"

"My dear lady, a truce with snakes means nothing but death in the end!" he exclaimed.

"This wicked man is determined on one thing alone—the destruction of your daughter!"

Myra shuddered instinctively and Alden noticed it with apprehension. It was this bare suggestion of the terror which was underlying the girl's spiritual bravery which prompted him to make the first serious error of his campaign.

Myra's mother persisted.

"It is just this way, Dr. Alden. Whatever, whoever these forces may be—it seems to me that they must be thoroughly frightened and alarmed for their own existence after the battle you have made against them. Would it not be possible to come to some sort of agreement with them?"

"But why?" persisted Alden.

The mother looked at him earnestly and pointed toward the wan face of the girl.

"Can't you see that every day of this terrible strain is eating away Myra's strength and life. Dr. Alden?" she demanded, with a gesture of despair.

"Mother, I am not at all afraid, and I agree with Mr. Alden in every particular," said Myra.

"Well, perhaps, with woman's intuition you are right," he said, reluctantly.

"Of course I am right," declared the older woman, with confidence. "These people are only flesh and blood after all. The first law of nature is self-preservation."

Alden nodded.

"Well, it is my duty to run these scoundrels to earth. Yet if they will spare Miss Myra I might agree. Still I do not know how to reach them."

Mrs. Maynard cast a triumphant glance at him, while Myra hesitated. Her mother walked to the library table.

"Here," she announced proudly, "is the name and address of the most wonderful clairvoyant in the world. I went to ask the advice of a very dear friend of mine. And she told me about Mr. Bert Reese, whom we can visit right this very morning. My friend says that he can get in touch with the living or the dead simply by mental power. I can hardly believe her—and yet for my little Myra I would believe almost anything and try even more. This terrible affair has already taught me that the most believeable things were what I used to regard as absolutely preposterous. I hardly know whom to trust."

Alden had taken from her hand the slip of paper which she had drawn from the table drawer.

"I have heard of Mr. Bert Reese, but never met him. He is said to be a wonderful psychic. It is a good idea to see him, at any rate," he admitted.

"Well, I'll do whatever you advise, doctor," said Myra, "but I hate to see your life work all go for naught."

Alden sprang to his feet nervously.

"We might as well hurry over to see him, then," he suggested.

Willis, the butler, obediently brought the wraps, unfortunately overhearing the conversation. In a few minutes they were speeding in the family automobile toward the home the psychic specialist. And even as they were ascending the steps of Reese's home Arthur Varney was repeating that operation before Myra's residence.

As Willis answered the door he appeared distraught, keen with some mixture of eagerness and fear.

"Is Miss Myra at home?" asked the clubman, entering with his customary assurance.

"No, sir. She and her mother have gone out, sir."

"Where did they go?"

"Out with Dr. Alden," was the grudging reply.

Varney looked startled, but quietly persisted in his interrogation.

"Where did they go?"

Willis hesitated, but Varney smiled condescendingly.

"You know, as Miss Myra's fiance, I have the right to inquire, Willis. She would be very angry with you if you did not tell her where I could find her."

Willis stammered and then became the obedient servant once more as he answered, formally:

"I'm not sure, sir, but I understood them to say that they were going to see a clairvoyant or some such person. A Mr. Reese, I think it was, sir, but I could not tell you the address, sir, as they did not instruct me."

"A clairvoyant? Bert Reese? Huh!"

Then catching the sharp and questioning look which shone in the servant's eyes he covered himself.

"What a ridiculous thing! Well, I don't know where that may be, and I suppose I had better wait here. They will be back soon, I am sure, as Myra had an appointment with me."

He tossed his hat and stick to the butler and ensconced himself in a comfortable library chair.

"That is all, Willis," he announced with an irritating attitude of proprietorship. "You may go now."

Willis bowed and left him alone, apparently reading a magazine. But no sooner was Varney alone than he sprang to the telephone. A quick, low-toned call for a certain number—and with eager watchfulness against possible eavesdropping he began to talk as soon as a familiar voice greeted him.

"Yes, yes, master."

There was a silence, in which the confident attitude was replaced by a certain timidity.

"Yes, master, I will do as you instructed me. But I wish to warn you against a new tack. Alden has taken them to Bert Reese, the clairvoyant. Be on your guard, for this man is determined—even as much as you and I are."

There was an apparently curt command, for Varney's face registered a new shade of fear as he added: "Yes, master, your commands are life and death—it shall be done!"

As he hung up the receiver he ran noiselessly to the library doors to examine the tapestries and all other possible hiding places of a possible auditor. But on realizing that his message had been safe he lighted a cigarette and resumed an abstracted perusal of the magazine to bide his time.

He had waited for fully ten minutes with no news from Myra when the butler entered.

"Is there anything I can do for you, sir?"

Varney regarded the man with skepticism. Willis seemed too bright-eyed in his solicitude. It were well to dispense with this watch-dog's attention for a brief period he told himself. He drew a banknote from his pocket.

"You are very thoughtful, Willis. You can favor me greatly if you will. I want some cigars and you can obtain them at the tobacco shop down the street. Here is a bill—just keep the change—I want three Havana Marios, Willis. And hurry right back with them."

The butler nodded and left the room with a perceptible glance of suspicion at the visitor. Varney did not mistake it.

"I'll be inclined to attend to you, my faithful flunky," he muttered, with a threatening smile, as he watched the butler disappear down the driveway. "However, I think your developing cleverness will be too late."

Sure that his way was clear, with the other servants busy in the kitchen, Varney slipped noiselessly up the broad stairway to the floor on which were the family bedrooms. He hurried into Myra's boudoir and cautiously opened the door. He entered, looked about and examined the room carefully.

"Ah!" he smiled, "I was afraid there were no electric lights up here because the house is old-fashioned. But there are both electric and gas. This is good!"

He examined the lighting fixtures, ascertaining that both the current and the illuminating vapor were in working condition. Then he went to the closet. Opening the doorway of this he searched within and found an electric light arranged so that the garments, so neatly hung within, were of easy access.

"Very convenient," exclaimed the plotter. "Well, here goes for the red rays. The Master said that ultra-violet rays of light would interfere with the astral projection, but that red would be the easiest. I will leave the light lit for future reference."

He unscrewed the ordinary incandescent bulb from the wardrobe socket. From an inside pocket of his coat he drew forth a peculiarly shaped red globe which he substituted for the other. Then, turning on the current, he closed the door and left the room with the same feline caution with which he had entered.

As he peered out of the window of the hall he beheld the figure of Willis hurrying up the driveway. Varney managed to reach the library just in time to assume a nonchalant attitude of absorption in the magazine when the butler quietly let himself in the front doorway.

"Well, Willis, you made a very quick trip. I thought the cigar shop was about two blocks away?"

"Yes, sir," answered Willis, with a cough of deprecation.

"Well, did you get the cigars?"

"No, sir. The man had none left, sir. I'm so sorry, sir."

"Did you get any others, Willis? You know I would have taken a substitute."

"Oh, sir, I thought you would be too particular to do that, sir," he replied. "Shall I send the gardener for some others, sir?"

"No, let it go, Willis. I will go down and get them myself, now," and he walked toward the hallway to look for his coat and hat.

As he turned back on the driveway to look at the mansion he chuckled.

"That old hypocrite never went there. He thought he fooled me. Well, he is guessing, but it will do no good. The Master told me that she would be mine forever and forever in all the ages if we win out. Well, we will win out with the arts and mysteries of the centuries to help us. I wonder what they doing at that clairvoyant's place?"

He walked on, satisfied.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

The Mental Messenger.

DOCTOR Alden and Myra had followed her mother into the study of the famous clairvoyant.

Alden, after the preliminary introduction, made an explanation of the case which interested the psychic profoundly. The doctor reserved many of the details, but this story was complete enough to win the vital interest of the other man.

"Well, I'll start right away," declared Reese. "Write your message on a piece of paper and I think I can convey it to the leader of this Black Order, no matter where he is."

Alden sat down at a table while the others waited. He used a memorandum pad and with his fountain pen had rapidly lined this simple offer of peace.

"If you will stop your attacks on Miss Myra and others I will agree to leave you in peace.
"PAYSON ALDEN."

"Now, while I relax in this big chair, just fold it up and hold it against my forehead. You do not need to show it to me now," instructed the clairvoyant, who had already drawn down the shades, leaving the room in a soothing darkness.

Alden obeyed. The clairvoyant closed his eyes and the trio about him were very silent.

Minutes passed, without avail. His face became drawn with the inward struggle which he seemed to be making. He breathed in gasps and even in the dim light of the room Myra saw that he was tensely clutching the leather arm of the big chair with clawing fingers.

"I can't reach him," he muttered, in a half moan. "I can't project it—there is some obstruction."

The minutes seemed to drag into hours, yet there was still failure.

Far away, with thumbs upturned against a sin-seamed jowl, sat the mysterious leader of the devil-worshipers in his characteristic attitude.

Strangely enough he was ensconced in a leaden-walled chamber the door of which was barred. The only ventilation came from a small slit window in the side of the compartment. On the sill of this lay a small, shiny crystal, different from that of Myra's in that it was some transparent material entirely black!

The Master gazed fixedly into this sphere and suddenly chuckled with satisfaction. Within the crystal a tiny fleck of white appeared and a note seemed to be unfolding.

"The message!" muttered the black magician. "I am receiving it now, protected against all outside influences."

He read it, repeating the words in an undertone. It was the message from Alden.

He hesitated and gritted his teeth in silent fury as he paused for thought. Then he snarled in that serpent-like hissing voice which was so expressive of the cunning of the mystery workers:

"There can be no truce between the black powers and the white!" was the message which Bert Reese suddenly received and registered on a white pad of paper with his trembling pencil.

"It is from the Black Order!" cried Alden, catching up the paper as Reese opened his eyes.

He read the ominous words and turned to the others with a grave tone in his voice as he added:

"Well, there is the reply. It is to be a battle to the finish from now on. I can see that. Well, so be it. It is better thus. Evil is never conquered by retreat nor scampering away in fright. While magic must win!"

Mrs. Maynard began to weep.

"Oh, doctor, I am so discouraged. I had hoped that my suggestion would bring us all peace at such a time. Why should they be so implacable?"

"Take this message," declared the doctor.

He scribbled another note, but the message could not be sent through the ethereal channels again, although the clairvoyant strove for half an hour. It was the query: "What is your price?"

And the reason for the silence in reply was that the Black Master had immolated himself within the protecting walls of the leaden chamber by closing the slit and withdrawing the dark crystal. He had stretched out in a recumbent position in an easy chair before his small duplicate of Alden's hypnotizing machine. Where that crooked, evil soul was journeying now, with the malevolent eyes closed, hands clenched tightly and hawk-like lips drawn over the fang-like teeth, only that individual spirit could tell.

Myra, her mother and Dr. Alden returned dejectedly to the house, where the physician bade them good-by.

"I'm going home to make some important experiments," he said as he parted. "I believe in preparedness. I'm assembling a little battery of soul artillery which will give the gentleman with the ubiquitous thumbs a new thrill."

"What do you mean?" asked Myra.

"I'll tell you that in due time," he said. "But now we've no time to lose."

They were standing in the corridor, near the big doorway. Mrs. Maynard had hurried upstairs to her room, a victim of renewed nerves, so that the couple supposed themselves to be alone.

But, unknown to them, Arthur Varney had returned to complete his call. He was standing now, ears alert, behind the portieres of the music room. He strained every nerve to catch the doctor's words.

Alden was holding Myra's little hand in his longer than he realized. He looked up suddenly and saw the sweet confusion of her warm glance.

"Miss Myra—Myra, it is always hard to say good-by to you because——"

"Why?" she queried softly.

"Because I love you!" he blurted out in a subdued but vibrant voice which carried the confession to the tingling ears of the eavesdropper. Varney's eyes flashed with jealous fury.

The girl gently withdrew her hand from the ardent clasp of the physician and removed her glove. She hold out the white fingers of the left hand and exposed the sparkling solitaire.

"Although it was all a mistake, which I cannot understand now, doctor, it is wrong for us to talk so while I am wearing Arthur Varney's ring."

"You are right, Miss Myra," answered the physician. "Good-by, we will talk of it later."

"'Not if I know it!'" muttered the secreted listener as he turned away with murderous determination on his dark face.

The doctor turned and after a deep look into Myra's smiling eyes, lit with a new hope now, he departed, his mind busied strangely enough with mingled plans for love and a fight to the death.

Myra paused on the doorsill, then turned into the music room.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, startled at the sight of Varney. "I didn't know you were here, Arthur."

"I've been sitting in this corner all the while, my dear Myra," answered the other from the far end of the room to which he had discreetly retreated. He pretended to have heard nothing, and Myra was relieved.

Varney sat down to the piano, began to play with a splendid touch. Myra turned in dismay as he began to sing, in a far from unpleasant baritone voice, the old song:

"Myra, my own love—Myra, my true love—
"Say you will be mine through the long years to come!"

Myra nervously ran to the piano, drawing his hand from the ivory keyboard with her own fingers.

"Arthur," she gasped. "I cannot marry you, Arthur. I am so sorry, dear friend, but I was not myself when we became engaged."

"You don't know what you are saying," he began.

"Yes, I do, Arthur. Now I know only too well. But before I did not realize. I cannot marry you, Arthur, and you must accept your ring back again."

He protested at first with a deep show of injured pride, then with that ingratiating eloquence and flattering consideration which had made the earlier impression upon the young girl he begged her to reconsider.

Gently she shook her head, and then to ease the pain which he declared was rending his soul she solaced him with: "Well, Arthur, I will think it over until Monday, if you insist."

Her manner was firm, and Varney grudgingly ended his entreaties. He abruptly made his departure and stormily walked down the driveway, flecking with his cane at the pebbles.

"I must get the Master to let me project my own astral this time," he muttered. "Then I'll play a hand that is worth while."

He took a taxicab at the nearest stand and made devious detours through the semi-suburban streets. Twice he changed vehicles, looking behind to observe if he were followed.

Apparently satisfied after more sinuous doubling upon his trail he disappeared through the doorway of an old building in a tumbledown section of the city. A few minutes later he was addressing the secret leader of the "Black Order" within the thought-proof shelter of the leaden chamber.

"Master, will you allow me to materialize my astral under the red light? Please do this, for I want revenge. My love has turned to hate!"

The Master scrutinized him with a look fairly biting in its piercing intensity.

"I had not planned it, Varney," he said, with a smile, "but perhaps it is a good variation. Yet I fear to trust this important work to anyone other than myself."

He beckoned toward the chair and drew the hypnotising machine toward his subject. Varney fixed his eyes upon the revolving mirrors as they showered the glittering rays. Gradually he became tense and silent. Then the Master muttered a strange incantation. The body sank back stiffly into the chair and the black pontiff laughed exultantly.

"Kill her!" he commanded. Kill her! Kill her! Kill her!"

He sat down then to await developments from the unseen. A wraith-like figure seemed to shadow itself for an instant in the corner of the room. It bore a bare resemblance to a human figure as it passed through the half-opened slit window of the lead chamber.

Back in Myra Maynard's bedroom the girl had stretched out to relax her throbbing nerves. Her head ached and her eyes burned with unbidden tears.

"Oh, it seems so wicked, so wrong that poor mother and I should suffer this way, for no fault of our own. And poor Payson."

The girl had closed the window for a bitter spring wind was blowing. She lay on the bed, unconscious of a gray shadow which had entered through the solid walls of the room. This wraith passed quickly into the closet, through the closed doorway. Myra dropped off into a troubled dream.

No soul within the residence had sensed the danger lurking within for the girl except one faithful servitor: Myra's pet collie, which stirred uneasily in its sleep in the lower hall.

The dog had sniffed, its hair rising stiffly along the scruff of its neck and it had backed into a corner with a low growl. Then it had curled up again, looking about the dim corridor with watchful eyes.

THE MASTER RECITED HIS PLAN

ALDEN WAS SORELY PUZZLED

CHAPTER XXXV.

The Materialization.

WITHIN the wardrobe a strange thing was taking place. The gray spirit, which seemed of no more substance than the shadow of smoke, was becoming more solidified. Now, lumps seemed twisting and forming in a queer kaleidoscopic manner, whirling about madly.

Gradually it assumed a definite shape—legs and arms appeared, likewise a crooked, gnarled neck, until finally a crude head with twisted features. It seemed barely human, this brutish figure crowding the silken gowns of the narrow wardrobe. Yet gradually it was pulled, by some unseen creative power, from a shape resembling a rough-hewn clay figure into the figure of a man.

The door of the wardrobe opened and the figure, walking clumsily, passed out through the portal into the girls' bedroom. There was merely the vestige of resemblance between this mottled, hideous monster and the swarthy, handsome Arthur Varney. Yet as it passed the mirror its smudgy eyes turned toward the fearsome reflection. The figure started back in terror; the block-like fingers went up in a gesture of dismay.

The materialized astral walked toward the bed, leaning over the sleeping girl. The figure walked toward the dressing table and lifted up Myra's shears. It return to the bedside and raising them up, dagger-like, was about to plunge them into the bosom.

Again the strange love of Varney for his hounded victim prevented, even in the spell of the Master's hypnotism. It paused, this evil incarnation of all that was evil in the man's spirit, drawing back as though in fear.

Then, dropping the scissors on the counterpane by the girl's head, the spectre walked toward the electric-gas fixture in the center of the room. It reached upward, turned on the jet valve and the gas began to escape.

The astral walked into the wardrobe again to close the door as secretly as it had been opened. Myra lay sleeping now, unconscious of the doom which was seeping through the opened jet.

In the glow of the red light, crushing her garments against the wall, the weird figure began to disintegrate as mysteriously as it had been carnated. Soon there was no trace of it except the faint shadow of grayness which now once more, in the ethereal state, passed easily through the panels of the shut door, into the room, where it gazed for an instant at the girl, then through the wall and down the stairs.

Once more it passed the collie. This time the animal sprang to its feet, backing away into the corner and barking in fright and rage. The astral passed through the walls and crossed the intervening space in its own odd manner until once more the eyelids of Arthur Varney's body fluttered with returning consciousness.

"Well!" cried the Master, eagerly.

"I turned on the gas," replied Varney. "Oh, how my arms hurt—and my feet—and my head! Help me, do something for me! I feel horrible!"

The Master soothed him with hypnotic gestures, his face relaxing into a smile of triumph long delayed.

The collie, down in the hall, had sniffed the air and then answering some subtle call of that brute instinct of which we know so little, trotted up the stairway. Still sniffing, it ran to Myra's room. There is scratched at the doorway.

There was no answer. Again it scratched and now began to bark. Its frantic howls, increasing in their desperate message, brought Willis and Mrs. Maynard from their rooms.

"What is the matter with the dog?" cried Myra's mother.

"I think he's crazy, madam," began Willis.

"What's that queer smell?" cried the mother.

"It's gas?" cried Willis, and Mrs. Maynard pushed upon the door, to be met by a sickening sweep of the choking vapor.

With a cough and an exclamation of alarm, Willis ran to the bed to lift the girl and carry her unconscious form from the room. Myra's mother opened the window and gasped for air. She reached up to turn off the stop-cock.

"She has tried to kill herself again!" the miserable mother murmured.

As Myra regained consciousness her mother plied her with questions. She could not understand. She entered the room weakly and saw the scissors on the bed.

"Mother, I did not put those there. And I certainly did not turn on the gas."

Mrs. Maynard was astounded, while Willis blinked in polite perplexity.

"Mother! mother! It is more of the work of the Black Order—we must send for Dr. Alden at once. Don't let a thing in this room be touched!"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A Trap for the Master.

DR. ALDEN lost not a minute in racing for Mona's home. The girl told him little over the telephone, but he guessed much.

When he was led to her bed room, he walked about with half-closed eyes and tightly compressed looks. He studied the position of the shears, and examined the little handle of the gas jet with a reading glass. There were apparently no tell-tale finger prints. Mrs. Mason and Mona waited silently as he continued his investigation of the door jamb, the threshold and even the window sills.

At last he opened the door of her wardrobe closet. There was the red glow of the incandescent bulb.

"Why, it's on fire!" exclaimed Mona, stepping forward excitedly.

"No, it's not," asserted the physician, whose hand had shot toward the electric light bulb. "It is worse than fire!"

He unscrewed the light from its socket and carried it to the window.

"Did you have a red lamp in your closet, Miss Mona?" he queried sharply.

"No it was white. I never saw that before."

"Um—ah!" and the doctor examined the object carefully. "This was made in France. I have only seen one like it before. It gives more crimson rays than any other light. I wonder how it came there?"

"I certainly don't know," and Mona regarded him with helpless bewilderment. "It was a white light this morning when I took out the gown I wore."

Alden studied the tiny filaments of the bulb.

"You know, Miss Mason, the peculiar thing about this lamp is that red light rays are conducive to psychic work. Here is a little stimulant for black magic. There was no way to enter your home at this time of day, except through the unseen. Here has been some materialization of which we know nothing. But I have the antidote for the red rays!"

"What is that, doctor?"

"Ultra-violet! And with your permission I will set up a little trap for these worthies which will be as scientific as their own methods," declared the physician, with the first suggestion of amusement in his eyes.

"How do you mean, doctor?" and Mrs. Mason shook her head in discouragement. "Things have been steadily going from bad to worse—each day of this miserable business brings additional danger to Mona, not to mention myself."

Mother instinct was thoroughly aroused; but Alden had conquered these objections before. He was too near success now to give in weakly.

"Just see how this turns out, Mrs. Mason!" he pleaded. "You saw how near they came to their purpose today. I wish they would try the little gas arrangement again. This time we will be prepared for them."

"You don't mean you want my daughter to run this risk of asphyxiation again?"

"Exactly!"

He had started toward the lower floor.

"With Miss Mona's permission I will telephone to my assistants to bring my apparatus over here at once. Can I have it?"

The girl smiled bravely, and nodded, despite her mother's remonstrance.

"Mona, I forbid!"

"Mother, dear, run right into the music room and have some tea served for the doctor and me and your dear, sweet, obstinate self!" was the imperious counter-objection.

Mrs. Mason walked away apprehensively.

"No good will come of all these curious machines!" she muttered to Willis, who tacitly agreed with her.

"Now," said Dr. Payson Alden, "I want you to tell a white fib if Arthur Varney calls up. I have left orders for my machines to come—so, it is better to let him think that you have gone out some place, or better still, that you and your mother are both ill, and will retire early. We do not want any outside advice on this matter."

"You do not trust Arthur, do you, Doctor?"

"I trust only you and myself, Mona," was the answer. "Let us not bring any one else into the matter. There has been treachery somewhere about your home already; I am unable to say exactly where. If Varney makes any inquiries just keep him wondering tonight."

As he spoke the telephone tinkled and Mona ran to the instrument.

"Yes, Arthur. It is I—Oh, I feel dreadfully tired, but not really ill. What is that? Oh, it is impossible. Mother is not herself at all tonight and she has already retired. No, I really couldn't see you at all until tomorrow. I'm going to be myself within an hour. Yes, good-by."

Alden smiled as she finished.

"There, now, I feel that we can work out our plans without sarcastic comments."

There was a crunching on the gravel within the half hour as a motor drew up before the door. Alden hurried to the door, expectantly.

"What can that be?" asked Mrs. Mason.

"My lamps. Right this way, Jones," directed the physician. Two workmen carried out some curious-looking brass tubes, set in heavy metal frames from which dangled coiled cables which resembles black garden hose.

Under his guidance they carried them up the stairs to Mona's room. There the two assistants, expert electricians busied themselves with the connnections of the tubular lamps, attaching them to the electric lights at the side of the bedroom.

Mrs. Maynard watched these preparations with growing disapproval.

"I am half a mind to telephone to Arthur Varney and ask his advice about this, Mona," she declared.

"You will do nothing of the sort," was the girl's determined answer. "Dr. Alden is working on something to end all this business tonight."

"That's it exactly," and the physician was now engaged in making a delicate connection between the gas jet and some delicate connection between the gas-jet and some delicate wire. "Now, I'll show you ladies a pretty little sight. Are you ready, men?"

"Yep, boss. Turn on the juice. We've got it fixed just like it was in your joint."

The twilight had darkened outside and suddenly, to Mrs. Mason's alarm, a crackling, shooting radiation of violet flames seemed to spring up about them from the tubes, which had been ranged around the room in rectangular position.

"There! These are ultra-violet rays and they will destroy all occult forces. No psychic action can go on in these defensive lights, and when some one endeavors to turn on the gas he will turn on the electricity instead. Now let the Master do his worst!"

Alden carefully removed all pins, scissors, and sharp instruments from the room.

With a few more adjustments the doctor was satisfied. He repaced the red incandescent in the wardrobe, gave Myra a detailed explanation of the wiring and left the room.

"Do you mind if I perch downstairs in the library for a few hours tonight, Mrs. Maynard?" he asked. "I have been working pretty hard on my psychic trap and I would like to be handy when it is worked."

The mother agreed, grudgingly; this "nonsense" was getting more and more on her nerves. It was a dreary wait for her until early bedtime, for she was possessed with a hundred new fears of the Great Unseen. But the physician's confidence, Myra's growing cheerfulness, both served to reconcile her.

At last the girl bade the doctor a soft-eyed good night and followed her mother up the stairs. Alden, with a cigarette and half a dozen of the father's old musty volumes of Medieval lore, was left to his own thoughts in the darkened library. He had, with foresight, drawn down the window shades so that his presence could not be observed from the outside.

An hour, two hours passed, without undue occurrence. Suddenly he heard a scream and rushed upstairs. Myra's door was locked. He heard her sobbing within.

"Let me in. I will help you!" he cried.

"Oh, it is too late now to do anything," he heard her faint voice. His heart leaped into his throat.

He banged at the door and Mrs. Maynard came running into the hall.

"What is it?" she cried. But the door was opening now and Myra's delicate figure, clad in her dressing-gown, slipped through the door to cower behind the stalwart young physician.

"Where is he? What was it?" cried Alden. "Ah, the violet rays were lit!"

"Yes. He came from the closet. I pretended to be asleep. He was horrible looking. But I recognized him."

Myra was burying her face in her trembling fingers.

"What happened then?" Alden advanced into the room with drawn revolver. It was entirely empty.

"He leaned over me. He looked around the room for some weapon, I believe. He tried to lift a chair to hit me but it was apparently too heavy. I could see it all by the moonlight through the window, and then he went to the gas-jet. Then I heard his voice."

"What did he say?"

"'Nothing is right unless I do it myself.' He turned on the gas jet and the violet lights sprang up all about the room."

"Yes, yes!"

"He seemed to scream silently. His arms twisted, his legs jumped up and down like a child's toy. He ran for the closet, but the tube of light on the floor was seeming to block the way. Then I saw his body, gradually melting away in this awful agony, actually fade and disappear before my eyes as it sank to the floor."

Alden's voice rang triumphantly.

"We got him that time!"

"But," interrupted poor bewildered Mrs. Maynard, "who was it, my child?"

The girl looked at her mother, made the thumbs-up sign of the devil-worshipers and, with her blue eyes staring wide, answered:

"That horrible beast the master!"

"That's the last of him," declared the doctor, as he held out his hand to the girl. "No materialized astral can live in the violet roys."

"I'm not so sure," she said, with vague intuition. "Not so sure."

(To Be Continued Next Sunday.)

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Synopsis of Previous Chapters.

Myra Maynard, a beautiful heiress, is pursued by a band of black magicians. Their goal is her death so that the fortune of Myra's father, a former member of the Black Order, may come to them before her arriving at legal age, according to his secret will.

Dr. Payson Alden, a brilliant young physician, who has devoted years to the study of the psychic, learns of their operations. Many times Myra's life is saved by the daring doctor. His efforts are made especially difficult by the secret connivance with the Black Order of Arthur Varney, a wealthy clubman, who is desperately in love with Myra, but held by fear to the commands of the high master. By hypnotism the girl is commanded to kill herself in the secret lodgeroom which her father has built in their house; she walks in her sleep to obey this, but is rescued by Alden. Under the instruction of the physician, Myra learns to project her astral or spiritual body, and during one of these psychic experiments the members of the order toil in their evil mysteries to bring her death by severing the astral chord so that the soul cannot return. The prayers of Myra's mother and the doctor win where science fails. [illegible] oriental flower is sent to the girl by Varney, but Alden's intervention saves her from death.

While endeavoring to track down the criminals Alden is thwarted by dynamite, and returns to his home to find that at the suggestion of Varney Myra has used the doctor's hypnotizing machine to send out her astral in search of him. The arch criminal substitutes his own soul for that of the girl, and in Myra's body endeavors to slay her benefactor. With souls twisted curious things happen, but Alden shrewdly forces the substitution and escapes with the girl from a new form of destruction.

Finally the devil worshipers make a supreme effort, sending the astral of Arthur Varney to the girl's room at night, where the body is materialized according to the methods of black magic. Varney turns on the gas, but good fortune saves her once more. Dr. Alden then sets a trap in her bedroom for a revisitation, placing ultra-violet ray electric lamps about the room.

A second attempt is made by this same method, no less a person than the high master materializing. The strange electric lights, cunningly turned on as he strives to slay the girl, decompose the astral materialization, and Alden feels confident that he has slain the arch enemy at last.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

The Death Sentence.

THE Master of the Black Order lay back, breathing heavily, his limbs twisting in an occasional paroxysm of pain. The black velvet curtains, close by the easy chair in which he reclined, seemed surcharged with the writhing of some restless spirit. Arthur Varney leaned forward studying the face of the leader with anxiety.

"Do you feel completely recovered, master?" he asked. "I thought you were dead last night. We worked over you for two hours or more."

The other's voice was husky, as he responded.

"Yes! My astral went through the most terrible sufferings. The chord was nearly destroyed by the ultra-violet. How could that scoundrel have learned about its power? And how could the trap have been set for me so? Who gave the warning that I was going there myself?"

Varney shook his head. The master fixed his basilisk eyes upon the dark ones of the clubman.

"Varney, I have more than once felt that there was a traitor in the camp. You know what happened to that Hindoo? Well, that was only the bare suggestion of what I know how to do in the line of punishment. Beware of treachery, Varney!"

The other man's voice shook as he extended a pleading hand.

"Oh, master! I have been faithful unto death. I have sacrificed my every impulse to obey your mandates."

"Yes," snarled the other, twisting as though in renewed agony. "And you know the reason why you have been afraid to break your oaths of fealty."

"You will not betray me?"

"No, as long as you remain faithful. But I know well that your love for Myra Maynard has made you hesitate several times when success was within our grasp. Remember, the reward I have promised you will only be paid if you earn it."

The master was silent for a few moments, lost in thought. At last he spoke.

"I am still suffering from the astral pain, due to the drag of the soul, from those accursed lights. But, now I know the instrument of our complete vengeance," and the master reached to the left, crashing a brazen summons on the Oriental gong which swung close at hand.

The master of ceremonies of the Black Order entered with a slow salaam.

"'Has the trial begun?" demanded the master.

"Yes, even as the master has commanded."

"'Let me have the listening tube," demanded the ruler of evil. A gutta percha tube was handed to his stiffened grasp, and he listened with a cruel smile on his face.

At the other extremity of the connection a tragic scene, similar in some ways to other gatherings of that mysterious group of evildoers—was being enacted. Yet there was adeadly tenseness in the robed figures with hooded heads which evidenced the change which had come over the self-confident members of the Black Order.

Within the past few days they had realized that their leader was not infallible. The grip of law and order had been closing in about them, driving them from the ancient meeting place to these new quarters. The hitherto indissuable master was, they knew, even now suffering from his psychic adventure, after two abrupt failures.

So it was that the spirit of suspicion burned in the breast of every member against every fellow. The shrewd leader had wisely planted with each one the germ of doubt, that he might play upon this destructive emotion for his own subtle purposes.

In the center of the black garbed group stood a man, unhooded. He looked about him fearfully, his rugged features now flabby with unconcealed panic; his gnarled fingers intertwining with nervous agitation.

"But, it was only a mistake," he pleaded hoarsely. "I swear that I obeyed the master, as well as I could.

A chorus of subdued, scornful laughs greeted this vain attempt at mollification. The gong crashed three times within, and now came the sibilant voice of the master, through the somber tapestry walls.

"What say ye, brothers of the Black? Shall this man die according to our laws?"

The master of ceremonies had re-entered, and the judges faced him, peering through the eyeholes of the grewsome hoods.

"All those who have decided upon the punishment for the traitor will indicate their wish in the ancient form," declared this individual.

He turned toward the man at his left with a questioning gesture.

"You, Brother Kappa?"

The masked man held out his hand, turning the thumb downward with a vicious jab in the air.

The culprit groaned and looked eagerly at the second, on the other's left.

Again, again, again!

The death verdict was registered by thirteen uncompromising thumbs. The trembling sufferer covered his eyes with his hands and screamed in an absolute breakdown of spirit:

"Mercy!"

Upon his knees, in the center of the cabalistic pentagram painted upon the floor of the room, he fell, his arms outstretched in mute appeal. The leader drew from a recess behind the altar a dagger and a small black lacquered box.

"It is decided. Death is the punishment. CHOOSE!"

He extended the two objects to the abject victim. The man stretched forward his hand for the knife, and then his flaccid fingers relaxed. He dropped it to the floor. He reached for the receptacle and opened it, as his judges chuckled knowingly. Within the box was a single white tablet.

"What is this?" he asked.

"Poison—quick and certain; which way of death will you follow?" asked the master of ceremonies sternly.

"Neither!" and the response was barely louder than a whisper.

The thirteen black figures about him arose from their crouching position. Now they stood with folded arms. The culprit stared about as though seeking some way to dart through the fatal circle. Yet he knew it was a hopeless thought.

"Choose!"

They spoke in unison, a grim chorus of sepulchral voices. As the white hands all pointed at him he finally weakened. He placed the tablet within his mouth and gulped it down. The figures drew closer now. Their heads were nearer as they watched with morbid curiosity the effect of the deadly drug. Suddenly the gong sounded once more from within and the voice of the evil pontiff reached them.

"Send in the doomed one. I would speak with him before he dies," were his words.

The prisoner was led through the curtains; he stumbled as he walked like a man in a trance. Within the sanctum, Varney now concealed in the corner of the room, the Master awaited with a venomous smile.

"You have learned the lesson for traitors. Even a mistake means death under my rule!"

The victim gulped again and strove to speak. But no words issued from the white lips. The Master placed a black box upon the altar near him, and, opening it, disclosed a number of small vials and boxes. He drew one of the glass containers from the case, after a careful study, uncorked it, and smelled it. Then he closed the box once more and put it away from sight. Varney observed him with fearful curiosity, but no one spoke until the great criminal opened his lips.

"Here is an antidote which will save you from the poison you have just taken!"

The culprit gasped and found his tongue at last.

"Oh, Master, give it me!" he begged. "Oh, pardon me, I have only erred, not sinned against our order. I will make restitution for the rest of my life; let me be your slave even more than I am now. But save me, Master, save me!"

He tried to snatch the vial, but the master of ceremonies forced him to his knees, as the leader drew back the saving drug with a cunning laugh.

"The poison is very slow. You need not take the antidote for two days," he observed. "A great deal may happen in two days. I will perhaps give you a chance for your life."

The culprit begged again for the drug, but the Master was adamant.

"You must earn it. I have work for you to do. And you have only two days in which to do it," he turned toward Varney and the ceremonial leader. "Leave us. I must instruct this man."

When the two were alone the Master engaged in an earnest conversation which lasted for many minutes. As he finished he relaxed once more in the easy chair, rubbing his aching limbs.

"I have now the chance to repay these spiritual hurts. It is worth it all in the end," he muttered as he closed his eyes in evil reverie.

THE ATTEMPT FAILED -

HE SIGHTED THE WEAPON CAREFULLY -

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Thought Photography.

IN his psychological laboratory Dr. Payson Alden was giving a little talk upon the curious science of thought photography. His auditors were Mrs. Maynard, Myra and the ubiquitous Arthur Varney. The latter, despite his cynicism about Alden's studies, displayed what seemed an unusually keen interest in the psychic. Many times Payson Alden had endeavored to eliminate him from their conferences, but Myra's mother, with feminine obstinacy, had insisted on his presence. And the physician good-naturedly weakened before her determination.

"Thought photography," the physician concluded, "is the supreme development of science, in proving the concrete nature of mental activity. Those pictures I have shown you were authentic prints from photographic plates made by investigators. The images recorded on the plates were Nature's reproduction of the thoughts in the mind of the experimenter. In some instances it was a number—clearly shown in the photograph; in other cases it was a simple object, such as a triangle, a square box or a bird. It has been necessary to pick out something which could be easily photographed. But I predict that we are just at the beginning of this new science."

"It is ridiculous," commented Mrs. Maynard. "I think that some one touched up the plates. To say that an unspoken thought can be impressed upon a piece of glass just because it is held over another person's forehead is ridiculous."

"You are right, Mrs. Maynard," chimed in Varney. "I know very little about science. I regard it all as a stupid bore—but I do know that the sun's light is necessary to make a photographic plate record anything. That's simple."

"How about x-rays?" demanded Alden, impatiently. "The radiations from a Roentgen tube light pass through the plate holder, without the sun's light at all, and photograph the bones and other objects. So, with thought, which is a definite vibration of the ether, it is more delicate, yet more powerful than any artificial light or force ever generated by man's instruments. I will prove it to you."

"Try it now, then!" taunted Varney.

"Why not get a picture of your thoughts?" retorted Alden, sharply.

Varney started nervously; then he smiled ingenuously.

"Well, my thoughts are not strong enough to make a record. You know, I do not claim to be intellectual. Try Miss Myra—have her think about me and we'll see the results."

"Very good," answered Alden. "Will you please sit down, Miss Myra, and we will make a try. We have two scoffers with us, however, and their thoughts may interfere."

Myra obeyed. Dr. Alden held the plate holder, closed tightly, to be light proof, against her low forehead. He was tempted to touch the alluring golden ringlets which framed the sweet oval face. But instead he averted his face and watched Varney, who was solicitously assisting Mrs. Maynard to don her street cloak. Myra's eyes had turned from Varney to Alden. She looked down in embarrassment as he suddenly caught the warm intensity of her gaze.

"I must be going, child, as Mrs. Watterson is coming over to talk about the club meeting next week. You can come on home with Arthur," said her mother.

She left the room and was soon speeding homeward in the automobile. Myra was silent and Alden intent upon his experiment. Varney fidgeted nervously, at last lighting a cigarette.

"Are you sure you are thinking about Mr. Varney?" asked Alden.

"Yes, yes, indeed," she replied quickly.

"Well, it is about time to develop the picture," said the doctor, looking at his watch.

He lifted the plate holder. Myra rose to follow him, with Varney, into the dark room. There he put the glass square through the usual process of washing, its bath in the developer, and finally in the hypo fixing bath. He peered at it against the dull crimson glow of the ruby light. Varney, standing behind them, was getting more restive.

"Have you any picture yet?" he asked, scornfully. "This close room is not what I would call a perfume shop. I cannot stand the odor of these chemicals very much longer, Myra. Please hurry up with the foolishness."

Alden was startled as he saw the image which appeared upon the glass plate. Myra looked at it and impulsively took it from him. It was the profile, not of Arthur Varney, but of Dr. Payson Alden! Her thoughts had indeed been traitors, caught in the net of the silver solution. As Alden started to speak, she interrupted.

"All right, Arthur, let us go home. Dr. Alden picked out a poor subject for his experiment, because the plate is absolutely untouched."

She placed the glass upon the developing table and Varney with a sigh of relief walked out into the light of the laboratory.

"I knew it was all nonsense. Some day, Alden, you will give up this silly business and return to prescribing for measles and mumps!" he said, as they started toward the lower door.

Alden's face had been illuminated with a curiously happy expression. Now he laughed at the sarcasm.

"Well, some day I want to do so, Varney. A physician's work is the most inspiring in the world. It is a life of sacrifice for the happiness and safety of others. Its real reward is not in the payment of bills, but in the knowledge of successful battling against death and suffering."

"Why don't you stick to it?"

"Because I believe in completing one task before starting another. As a psychic practitioner I am working right now as a spiritual surgeon to remove from society a dangerous disease—a virulent cancer of criminality—so that it may threaten no more innocent lives. I am doing the best medical work, along a new line, of my whole career right now."

Varney shot a look of venom at the physician which was unobserved, as that gentleman was helping Myra with her street coat.

The trio left the house, to walk by a roundabout path to the Maynard home. A long jaunt it was, and Myra did most of the talking, her face illuminated and a strange gladness in her heart that the thought photograph had turned out as it had, that Dr. Alden knew her secret. Myra felt that, despite their anxiety, matters were working out toward a solution which would bring ultimate reward.

"I wonder if the Master of the Black Order is still in the land of the living?" she asked him, as they turned into the driveway of the residence.

"I wonder," mused Payson Alden.

"I wonder," echoed Arthur Varney, with a faint smile.

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CHAPTER XXXIX.

The Gardener's Planting.

AS the three of them walked up toward the fine old mansion Myra say a man working over the hedge, with the thick scissors used by gardeners. His face was strange to her.

"Who is that man?" asked the doctor, quickly.

"I never saw him before. I'll ask," replied the girl. She walked over toward the man, nodding pleasantly.

"Who are you?" she asked.

The fellow touched his cap with a grimy finger.

"The lady just engaged me as the new gardener, Ma'am. My name is Joe."

"All right, Joe. I hope your work turns out well. We have needed some one to attend to the lawns and hedges for over a week. I attend to my own flowers, but will be glad to have you around to help me with your advice. Good day."

She turned away and the man again touched his cap. There seemed a shade of regret on his face, then his heavy mouth tightened and he continued his task of clipping the new shoots of the old hedgerow. As Alden and Varney passed, the latter shot a keen glance at the workman, and then looked away indifferently.

Within the house Mrs. Maynard greeted them, while Myra went upstairs to attend to the little vanities of adjusting her wind-blown curls and a tiny dab of the powder puff. She removed her hat. She tossed her street coat to a chair, and then, realizing that the room was close, she walked to the window to raise it. As she did so there was a sudden, sharp report from outside the house!

The glass of the window was shattered a few inches above the yellow head and her hair was covered with the broken fragments. She brushed the slivers aside, and jumped to the shelter of the wall. Then she walked quickly to the opposite side of the room, where the little jagged hole in the wallpaper betrayed the presence of the bullet which had grazed her so narrowly. She ran her fingers over it, with a shudder of apprehension.

Alden, followed by Varney, had dashed up the stairs. The two men peered into the doorway excitedly.

"What was it?" demanded the physician.

She pointed to the bullet hole, and then toward the broken pane of glass.

"Somebody fired at me through the window."

The physician turned quickly, and ran down the stairs, three steps at a time. He sped through the doorway to the portico. The gardener was working with a rake in one of the flower beds about twenty feet from the house.

"Did you hear that shot, my man?" demanded the doctor. "Come, now, some one tried to shoot Miss Myra."

The gardener shook his head, with an expression of incredulity.

"I heard something, sir. I thought it was the auto back-firing. That was all, sir."

"Where did the sound come from?" The physician stared keenly at the workman.

"It came down that way, sir, as I recollect it," answered the gardener.

He pointed toward the distant street, far down the driveway, with a stupid uncertainty.

"That is too far away," declared Alden. "The shot sounded very near. Are you sure you didn't see anyone?"

Varney had come up behind Alden. The gardener reiterated his statement.

"I think the man is right," he declared. "The sound came from a long distance away, Dr. Alden."

The physician shook his head, and without more ado walked down the side of the yard toward a little summer house which was the only possible place of concealment for anyone on the premises. He entered this through the doorway, which faced Myra's bedroom window. Alden observed nothing more dangerous than an old green gardener's wheelbarrow, a few potted plants, and some flower boxes. As he came out, disappointed, he observed Arthur Varney questioning the gardener sharply.

"Well, what did you learn?" asked Varney. "This man is a stupid dolt, and knows nothing, I am sure."

Alden looked fixedly at the gardener, who returned his gaze without a quiver of the heavy eyelids. Then the doctor walked back to the house, followed by Varney.

"You must not worry Mrs. Maynard; it was doubtless an accident of some sort. Just let Miss Myra be more careful in the future, that is all," suggested Alden.

"It is a mere trifle," and Varney for the first time assented in an opinion with his rival.

But a sharp glance of subtle warning apprised Myra that the physician was sending her a wordless message of portent. The four of them took a long motor ride that afternoon, dining at a quaint old road tavern up in Westchester. When they returned it was nearly midnight.

Myra apprehensively asked the two men to enter, that she might look through the house for any possible intruders. Mrs. Maynard was annoyed, but Alden assented. They went through the house from basement to garret, and made sure that no marauders had secreted themselves

Then, after a significant glance from the doctor, Myra urged them to remain a few minutes longer in the music rom. Mrs. Maynard politely half concealed a yawn and Varney accepted the hint by rising.

"It is later than I thought; why, it is after twelve. It is time for all good people to be abed," he said, with a look at Alden, as he walked to the door.

The doctor ignored the remark, bidding him a cool good night.

After Varney's departure Myra's mother resorted vainly to another visible hint, and finally excused herself with a reproachful look at Myra. But the girl pretended not to see her.

No sooner had the swish of Mrs. Maynard's silk dress been quieted then Dr. Alden turned to Myra.

"I suspect that new gardener of yours. Where does he sleep, Miss Myra?"

"Over the stable, in the groom's room. Our chauffeur lives at home."

"Well, I'd like to find out what blossoms of thought he is raising in the garden of his brain," was Alden's further comment.

"What do you mean? Thought photography?".

"Exactly. I fortunately happen to have plateholder with a new plate in my pocket. I am going up there and get an impression while he is asleep."

"Splendid," exclaimed the girl. "But you must let me go with you to show the way."

The doctor objected. But at last Myra persuaded him to let her accompany him. They were soon tiptoeing through the silent stable, and up the stairs.

The gardener they found sleeping heavily. Alden intensified his slumbers with a few skillful hypnotic passes. Then he placed the plateholder against the man's forehead for many minutes.

It's time now," he said, examining his watch with the aid of his pocket bulb-light.

They left as silently as they had come, after the doctor had released the hypnotic spell with a few gestures of the hands. The man slept on, unwitting of the visitation.

When they reached the house Mrs. Maynard was angrily pacing the hall floor.

"This is outrageous, Dr. Alden! There is a limit to my good nature. You had no right to expose Myra to the night air at this time. And besides, she should not be out of the house now with all the danger about her."

Alden apologised, trying to mollify her.

"We were experimenting with thought photography again," said Myra, as Alden helped her remove her cloak.

"Ridiculous! You come right up to bed."

Alden glanced at the long cheval mirror in the hallway.

"A splendid idea," he suddenly exclaimed, and impetuously he lifted it from its support, starting up the stairway with it. Myra's mother was astounded, but the doctor ignored her comment, advancing to the girl's room.

The moonlight was streaming through the window. Myra, at Alden's suggestion, pulled down both the black and white shades, and lit the electric lights.

"Now," said the physician, standing the mirror up at an angle from the window, "if Miss Myra stands right here at the side of the window, she will be protected and to any one outside the window it will appear that she is standing right in the window itself. If there is another 'accidental' shooting like this one today the bullet will go through the mirrored reflection. Do you understand.

Myra nodded, but her mother sniffed indignantly.

"All these scientific things have done nothing but bring on more trouble. You must go home, now, doctor!"

Alden laughed indulgently.

"All right. I apologize for wearing out my welcome, but it is not self-interest. I simply insist that Miss Myra stay in the house, keep away from all windows until after breakfast, and then at her normal rising time she pull up the shade from the side. Good night!"

He left Myra with an unusually ardent hand clasp, and the girl slept in her mother's room that night. Alden developed the thought photograph in the seclusion of his laboratory dark room before he went to bed. Whatever the result he seemed satisfied with his deductions.

CHAPTER XXXX.

The Machine Gun.

NEXT morning around breakfast time a certain deserted cottage on a hillside several hundred yards away from the Maynard home was visited by Arthur Varney and a companion who was carrying a leather case. Varney opened this cautiously and drew from it a powerful telescope. He adjusted this in the window of the eastern side of the house, training it upon the faraway window of Myra's bedroom. After fixing the focus satisfactorily he turned to the other.

"Well, it will be easy to see from here now. I wonder what is delaying the gardener?"

Even as he spoke the man sidled furtively in through a rear door. He touched his hat respectfully to Varney, and they exchanged the "thumbs-up" sign of the Black Order.

"Her shade is still drawn, so she is not awake yet," said Varney. "Is the mechanism all right?"

"Yes, sir. The automatic aimer is right in this box by the window. See?" and the gardener, who had been working for many hours since the dawn, lifted the lid of an innocent-looking dry goods box.

He raised on a pivoted arm a small device similar to that used in the conning tower of a battleship, for the electric aiming of the big guns in the turret. The Master, it was evident, was a genius along more material lines than the spiritual; for this contrivance was all his own in planning, connection, and execution. The sights were arranged in the line of vision through the power glass, and directed delicately at the windows still covered by the white drawn shade

"Oh, sir, do you think the Master will keep his promise to me?" pleaded the man, nervously. "You know one day has already passed since I swallowed that stuff"

Varney lit a cigarette and started to the doorway.

"The Master never breaks a pledge. You must keep your word with him. I will leave you here to carry out your duty."

Then he walked by a roundabout course to the Maynard home. As he reached the driveway Dr. Allen descended from the taxicab. Varney had reached the porch by the time the physician had received his change from the chauffeur. The two rivals exchanged sharp looks, but spoke with formal politeness.

"I thought it would be wise for me to drop in, early as it is, to see how Miss Maynard is feeling this morning," explained Varney.

"That was my idea, as well," coldly responded the doctor.

As they entered the doorway, they heard a scream from Mrs. Maynard, who stood on the second floor at the head of the stairway.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed the doctor, running up.

Myra's mother had disappeared in the direction of the room of her daughter. Within Myra's room was further evidence of the tragic determination of the devil-worshipers! The big mirror was shattered by another bullet.

"Look!" cried Myra, as she stood in the shelter of the wall. "The bullet passed through the glass exactly where my head was reflected."

Alden had rushed downstairs once more. This time his action was carefully planned, in advance, for as he sped down the steps a policeman stepped out from the angle of the house where he had been concealed.

"Doctor! I saw it. It was from that summerhouse there—a puff of smoke went up from the door of it!"

Alden and the bluecoat ran for the summer house, with drawn revolvers. Again it was empty.

"This is just the way it was yesterday," began Alden, and then he began to pry around the old junk which littered the place. Now, however, he found something more definite. It was the muzzle of a sawed-off rifle.

Gingerly the physician drew it up, finding it arranged in a vice-like holder, attached to a tiny mechanism of wheels and springs. The whole arrangement had been cunningly concealed under the board flooring of the summer house.

"An automobile sighter," was the doctor's comment. "Let's see where these wires lead."

The policeman blew his whistle and a half dozen more officers appeared on the scene as though by magic. Arthur Varney, standing on the porch steps of the house, gave vent to a muttered imprecation, and bit off the end of a cigar, as his teeth closed in rage.

"What's all this trouble?" he asked of Alden.

"I've found the method, and now I'm going after the guilty party for I know where he is!"

The doctor, with his weapon in his hand, now hurried toward the stable. He was followed by Varney, Miss Myra and her mother, while one policeman stalked along grimly after them.

Alden rushed up the stairs to the gardener's room, and cautiously opened the door. The room was empty. Varney gave vent to another of his irritating laughs.

"I guess you must have had a bad dream last night,' doctor!" he taunted. "Your theories have been wool-gathering."

"Not at all," said the physician. "This man is the one who has engineered the deal; at least, his hand was on the throttle of the engine of death!"

The others had crowded into the deserted room, as Alden drew something from his pocket.

"How do you know that?" was Varney's question. Despite his rabid dislike of this interloping meddler, he was forced against his will to a profound admiration of the physician's subtle sleuthing."

"Simply with this!"

Alden held up a small photographic plate, which he handed to Myra. On it was a blurred image of a man's head, with two thumbs upturned on either side of the malevolent, snarling features. It was the face of the master of the Black Order.

"How did you get that?" And Varney's voice was tense and eager.

Alden looked at him, answering slowly.

"You ridiculed my thought photography yesterday—well, this is one time when it worked out right."

"Let me see it. I can't believe that such things are done.

Varney snatched the plate, studied it earnestly, and then bunglingly dropped it to the floor. The glass square was shattered hopelessly.

"Oh, excuse my stupidity!" he apologized. "I am so clumsy—this terrible affair has made me nervous."

Alden looked at him and then shrugged his shoulders. He started for the ground floor again.

"Well, it is of no consequence. We will get him yet. And there is a goodly supply of photographic plates still left. I have only begun to make my collection of thought pictures. Let us see what the police have dug up."

They found the yard deserted, except for a lone policeman.

"Where are the others, officer?" asked Varney.

In the distance they could barely see the blue figures rushing into the small structure. The four of them peered intent, to observe the men reappear, looking about the grounds, as though the trail had been lost.

This proved to be the case. The police captain was back in a few minutes to tell Dr. Alden of his failure.

"The birds had flown," he said. "We found a big telescope, and an automatic sighter at the end of the wires. They were laid about three inches deep in the dirt, and it didn't take us long to trace them up. But, you can't swear out a warrant against a telescope and a box full of wires and wheels."

* * * * * *

CHAPTER XXXXI.

The Gardener's Reward.

IN the secret headquarters of the Black Order several of the black-robed brethren were conversing in excited whispers. Big things were afield as they well knew. But everything was uncertain, in suspense.

The gardener, after giving the regu-

(Continued on Page Eighteen.)

Like A Boy at 50 Bubbling Over With Vitality—Taking Iron Did It

Doctor says Nuxated Iron is greatest of all strength builders—Often increases the strength and endurance of delicate, nervous folks 200 per cent. in two weeks time.

NEW YORK, N. Y.—Not long ago a man came to me who was nearly half a century old and asked me to give him a preliminary examination for life insurance. I was astonished to find him with the blood pressure of a boy of 20 and as full of vigor, vim and vitality as a young man; in fact a young man he really was notwithstanding his age. The secret he said was taking iron—nuxated iron had filled him with renewed life. At 30 he was in bad health; at 46 careworn and nearly all in. Now at 50 a miracle of vitality and his face beaming with the buoyancy of youth. As I have said a hundred times over, iron is the greatest of all strength builders. If people would only throw away patent medicines and nauseous concoctions and take simple nuxated iron, I am convinced that the lives of thousands of persons might be saved, who now die every year from pneumonia, grippe, consumption, kidney, liver and heart trouble, etc. The real and true cause which started their diseases was nothing more nor less than a weakened condition brought on by lack of iron in the blood. Iron is absolutely necessary to enable your blood to change food into living tissue. Without it, no matter how much or what you eat, your food merely passes through you without doing you any good. You don't get the strength out of it and as a consequence you become weak, pale and sickly looking just like a plant trying to grow in a soil deficient in iron. If you are not strong or well you owe it to yourself to make the following test: See how long you can work or how far you can walk without becoming tired. Next take two five-grain tablets of ordinary nuxated iron three times per day after meals for two weeks. Then test your strength again and see for yourself how much you have gained. I have seen dozens of nervous, run-down people who were ailing all the while, double their strength and endurance and entirely get rid of all symptoms of dyspepsia, liver and other troubles in from ten to fourteen days time simply by taking iron in the proper form. And this after they had in some cases been doctoring for months without obtaining any benefit. But don't take the old forms of reduced iron, iron acetate or tincture of iron simply to save a few cents. You must take iron in a form that can be easily absorbed and assimilated like nuxated iron if you want it to do you any good, otherwise it may prove worse than useless. Many an athlete or prizefighter has won the day simply because he knew the secret of great strength and endurance and filled his blood with iron before he went into the affray, while many another has gone down to inglorious defeat simply for the lack of iron.—E. Sauer, M. D.

NOTE.—Nuxated Iron, recommended above by Dr. Sauer, is not a patent medicine nor secret remedy, but one which is well known to druggists and whose iron constituents are widely prescribed by eminent physicians everywhere. Unlike the older inorganic iron products, it is easily assimilated, does not injure the teeth, make them black, nor upset the stomach; on the contrary, it is a most potent remedy, in nearly all forms of indigestion, as well as for nervous, rundown conditions. The manufacturers have such great confidence in Nuxated Iron that they offer to forfeit $100.00 to any charitable institution if they cannot take any man or woman under 60 who lacks iron and increase their strength 200 per cent, or over in four weeks' time, provided they have no serious organic trouble. They also offer to refund your money if it does not at least double your strength and endurance in ten days' time. It is dispensed in this city by James O'Donnell and all other druggists—Adv.

AMERICAN GENET IS FIGHTING FOR FRANCE

Great-Great-Grandson of Diplomat Writes of Experiences in the Trenches.

PARIS, June 11.—Edmond C. C. Genet, one of the American volunteers under the French tricolor who have remained in the Foreign Legion, came to Paris recently on the customary week's leave of absence. His vacation ended, he returned to the fighting zone, reaching the railhead nearest his regiment just at nightfall. Here he met two other Legionnaires also returning from a furlough. The three comrades started off together in the gathering darkness to find their corps.

The legion is at present in a rather quiet sector of the front and its trenches are located in a dense forest. At places the French and German lines are 1,200 yards apart at other points quite near together. Genet writes of how he and companions came near falling in the hands of the Germans.

Simple Matter to Get Lost.

"On returning here I nearly prolonged my permission—in the wrong direction," he writes. "I walked a little bit too far when I landed on the line the night of the 28th. It was uncommonly dark, and in the dense woods among the many, many paths and trenches it was all too simple a matter to become confused.

"When I got that strange, uneasy feeling that something was out of place—namely me—you can picture the rather riotous retreat we three made. We got so near the Boches we could hear them talking. We finally found the Third Company of the legion and decided it was best to wait until dawn to do any more searching for our company, so spent the remainder of the night there. I am thoroughly convinced that a man of this strange outfit is far safer on this side of the line, especially an American at this particular time.

"We are in the trenches just now, and I expect it will be some time before we return to the rear. Not only that, but I feel sure there is going to be a strenuous offensive started by the French before long. Let it come; the sooner the better, and we'll drive the Boches back where they will cry 'Kamarads' in grim earnest and for keeps.

Would Fight for Uncle Sam.

"The papers are giving reports of a very near severance of friendly relations between the United States and Germany. I am glad to be bucking up against the Boches with France, but I surely will be overjoyed if the time is at hand, when I can face them in the ranks of Uncle Sam."

Genet is the great-great-grandson of Citizen Genet, who was French minister in the days of Washington. One of the ministers sons married a daughter of George Clinton, revolutionary governor of New York, and it is from him that Edmond Genet is descended. Edmond was one of the crew of the United States battleship Georgia when war broke out between France and Germany and his mother bought his release that he might come to Europe to fight for the land of his ancestors. The young Legionnaire is only nineteen, and he has been at the front for more than a year. His home in America is at Ossining-on-the-Hudson.

Girl Was Stricken Dumb When She Was Discharged

ST. LOUIS, June 11.—Declaring she was stricken speechless when she was discharged by her employer, Miss Neily McGlenn, thirty-two years old, stood on the stairway in the building from 9 a. m. until 9:30 p. m., when she was taken to the City Hospital and placed in the observation ward.

Then Miss McGlenn went on a hunger strike at the hospital, saying "she could not eat if she could not work." Forced feeding was employed, the patient fighting the attendants.

Dentists Can't Grab Teeth.

MADISON, Wis., June 11.—If a man acquires a face full of gold crowns under an agreement with a dentist that he is to pay cash when the job is completed, can he be prosecuted for obtaining property under false pretenses if he walks out without observing that formality? He cannot. Attorney General Owen said so in an opinion to District Attorney J. L. Kelly, Princeton.

ANACOSTIA TO KEEP ON CARNIVAL DRESS

Decorations Will Stay Up Until Thursday, When Program Will Be Concluded.

All decorations at Anacostia for the carnival which was cut short by the rain Friday night, will remain in place until next Thursday evening, when the program will be concluded.

Privates homes and business houses in Anacostia will be illuminated tonight, when the public is invited to Anacostia.

Announcement has been made that all invited guests and other citizens who were to be present Friday night, are requested to attend Thursday evening. There will be a baseball game between two teams of the Potomac League at 5 o'clock. A country circus will be staged at Fairlawn at 7:30 o'clock, and there will be public speaking at 8:30 o'clock by the Commissioners, officials of the street railway, and others.

At 10 o'clock there will be fireworks and dancing. All the lights at Fairlawn will remain in place. A band will play.

SOUGHT AS ASSASSIN, IS FOUND MURDERED

Italian, Missing for Year, Victim of Black Handers, Who Hid Body.

EASTON, Pa., June 11.—With the legs tightly bound by wire and the body weighted with heavy iron plates, the body of Vincenzo Nunsera, alias "Jimmy" Rossi, was recovered yesterday from the hole of the abandoned Northampton slate quarry near Pen Argyl. Nunsera is the man the Easton police have been trying to find since November 4, 1915, when, they say, he murdered Pietro Giaimo, a trackman, while the latter was working on the Northampton traction line at Seventh and Spring Garden streets, by slashing his throat with a razor.

The police charge that Nunsera was not only a murderer, a white slaver, and the head of a Black Hand gang that had terrorized Easton, South Bethlehem, Bangor, and other towns in the slate belt, but that he fell a victim to his own gang by failing to play fair with them in dividing their spoils.

County Detective Neimeyer had tried for months to get trace of Nunsera, and Lawrence Cordotto, who was said to have been with the former on the day that Giaimo was murdered. Cordotto was found at Strudsburg three weeks ago, and arrested. He denied connection with the Giaimo murder, but said that Nunsera himself had been murdered.

He said that he had accidentally witnessed the crime: that Nunsera was first killed and then the body was wrapped with wire, weighted down, and thrown into the quarry hole.

John Wollers, a diver from Philadelphia, came here Thursday, and yesterday, on his sixth attempt, brought up the body from 105 feet of water.

Late this afternoon James Curra, was arrested at Pen Argyl, and Cordotto identified him as one of the men who had murdered Nunsera.

Insists Upon Being Taxed For $2,000 Worth of Dogs

ATCHISON, Kan., June 11.—On the assessment rolls of Brown county the name of F. E. Kelly, who lives on the Kickapoo reservation, is down for $3,510 worth of property. Mr. Kelly's hogs, cattle and implements are valued at $1,510, and twenty dogs at $100 each. They are hounds.

County Clerk John Mathewson thought there was a mistake in entering the assessment and took the matter up with Kelly. The owner of the twenty dogs insisted on standing pat on his returns, and in addition to paying personal taxes on the twenty hounds, he will also have to pay the regular dog tax.

THE MYSTERIES OF MYRA

An Inspiring Novel and Motion Picture Drama

Written by Hereward Carrington.
Dramatized by Charles W. Goddard.

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(Continued from Page Twelve.)

lation signals, entered the room. He looked about nervously.

"Did you succeed?" the leader of ceremonies bluntly demanded of him.

"Yes, brother. Our cause has been successful. I have come to claim my reward."

The leader disappeared behind the somber hangings. He reappeared almost instantly.

"Come within. The Master awaits you."

The gardener followed. The inner chamber was dark and the man groped helplessly for an instant. Then the red glow began to suffuse the room and the face of the Evil one appeared. Instinctively the gardener's clenched fists went to his cheek, the thumbs upturned above his ears. A rasping voice rang out in the fetid, incense-cloyed room as the gardener dropped reverentially to his knees.

"What is the result, brother? Did you obey my mandate? Has the will of the order been fulfilled?"

The gardener stammered, and then answered thickly.

"Yes, Master. She is dead. Give me the antidote which was to be my reward. I feel the poison already working."

He stretched out his hands imploringly. The Master's face had now become discernible in the glowing light. The evil pontiff was posed as usual, with his thumbs in the diabolical, horn-like gesture, his face appearing above the black altar. He lowered his hands and clawlike fingers, drew forth a white vial, filled with some liquid, appearing before the anxious eyes of the gardener.

"And so you have obeyed me? You have earned forgiveness and life."

"Yes, Master. But be quick. I feel the poison gnawing at my heart even now."

The gardener's eyes dropped before the piercing bite of the Master's somber eyes. The Master rose from his position, taking his fingers away from the coveted vial. The gardener stood up, arguing, pleading with a frenzied intensity.

"You fool," snarled the ruler of the villainous cult, "you lie! You are a blunderer! I know the truth. You cannot have the antidote—you must meet the fate which is decreed by the order. Death is your portion now."

The gardener cunningly noticed the isolation of the vial. His fingers close convulsively about it. Apparently yielding to the inevitable, he dropped his head and turned away, secreting the vial. The Master and the leader of ceremonies exchanged smiles. He left the room without intercedence.

Once in the outer apartment, he hurriedly left the place. Down a lonely lane he ran, free from the fear of the brotherhood. He ran into Arthur Varney, who pointed an accusing finger at him.

"You have failed!" cried the latter, angrily, "I will tell the master."

"I know I failed!" cried the man, exultantly, "But I have obtained the antidote!"

With the words he gulped down the contents of the vial and ran on. Varney started to follow, then changed his mind. He quickened his pace and was soon in the company of the master.

"Fear not, Varney. The man will earn his own reward! The first pill that he took was harmless. The contents of the vial—which he stole from me—were—well, he will find out."

Varney did not understand. But outside of the Maynard mansion the gardener was staggering with increasing weakness. Alden was stepping down from the porch to the ground. He pointed toward the gateway excitedly.

"Look, there he comes now!"

As he spoke the policeman had grasped the man and was dragging him into the gateway. The gardener lost unconsciousness and the bluecoat lifted him bodily, bringing him up toward the house. Alden rushed toward them and saw the froth upon the man's twitching lips.

"The man is poisoned," cried Alden.

He drew a hypodermic from a pocket medical case, and endeavored to bring the fellow back to consciousness. The man's eyes rolled, but he seemed unable to speak. At last, after several minutes of work, the unfortunate victim's lips moved, and Alden leaned over him to catch every word.

"The Master poisoned me. You will find him in the new rooms under the old"—

Alden shook the man's shoulders excitedly.

"Where is the order?" he cried.

Mrs. Maynard and Myra were sobbing, while Varney was standing quietly in the rear of the group.

As the man opened his eyes again, Varney walked away to the edge of the porch, out of view.

"I cannot bear to see these poor fellows die," he told Alden later.

Meanwhile all efforts to restore the man were unavailing. The policeman took down the data, and sent in a call for an ambulance which arrived in a few minutes from the nearby branch hospital. But no science could prevail against the deadly drug that was eating at the unfortunate's vitals.

"Poor chap! He's a goner," was the remark of the ambulance surgeon. "But we'd better rush him down to the ward to see what we can do."

Dr. Alden endeavored to ease the shock to the girl and her mother, after the unfortunate had been borne away with the bluecoat riding with him.

"Well, it's another miscarriage of the evil plans. I wonder what they will do next?"

Dr. Alden was destined to learn even sooner than he expected.

(To Be Continued Next Sunday.)

See this episode today at the Hippodrome, 9th St. and N. Y. Ave.—Advt.

MAIL SACK ROBBER MISSES A FORTUNE

Daring Thief at New York Grand Central Picks Least Valuable Bag.

NEW YORK, June 11.—Out of hundreds of registered mail bags, some of them containing many thousands of dollars, a robber, or robbers, at the Grand Central Terminal last Wednesday night picked about the least valuable of all, by a scheme which is described as unique and daring.

With only eleven minutes' leeway, a man crawled under the platform ledge of track No. 14, where train No. 35, the fast Western mail, was loading, and grabbed an inside sack, which might have contained bank balances en route between Chicago and New York. He found himself later in possession of a sack consigned to Portland, Ore., filled with registered packages, one of which contained a $10 bill, another a broker's invoice, three or four with small articles of jewelry, and others with nondescript merchandise. On the same platform in pouches exactly similar were fortunes.

Carries Valuable Mail.

Train No. 35, made up entirely of mail cars, leaves the Grand Central Terminal at 9:31 every evening. It is the aristocrat of all mail trains, for it carries such things as bank clearances not sent by express, Government deposits, and things of like value. It would make the fortune of any train robber, but it travels with the speed of the Twentieth Century Limited, and it connects at Chicago with mail flyers which make record trips to the Pacific coast.

The train is made up on platform No. 14, on the upper level at the Terminal, and when it is making ready that particular platform is as closely guarded as a foreign ruler. However, under the projecting ledge of the platform is a shelving space about three feet wide and four feet high along which the "knockers," the men who test wheels and air brakes, can go just before a train pulls out.

It happens that at the far end of the platform an excavation on the Lexington avenue side of the terminal begins. No one thought of this Wednesday night when the registered mail arrived at 9:15 for the 9:31 train. There was not much time to think of anything, for it all had to be done in sixteen minutes. It was known further that at 9:26, five minutes before the train's departure, the "knocker" would come along and examine everything under the platform.

Find Empty Sack.

The man who did this on Wednesday night found an inside pouch, which is smaller than one of the big leather cases, ripped open and lying on the track. Everything had been taken from it. The checkers inside the car discovered at once that it was the Portland pouch and reference to the postoffice record showed that it had contained eleven pieces.

Postoffice authorities said yesterday they had discovered that some one working with a platform man or aided by a hook had abstracted the pouch from a pile on the platform. He had known that he had only eleven minutes to do the trick and had taken a chance of getting something valuable. The total value of the loot was only a few hundred dollars, it was said.

Found Guilty on Charge Of Soliciting Bribes

MUNCIE, Ind., June 11.—Gene Williams, deputy prosecutor, was found guilty of conspiracy to solicit bribes today by a jury here this morning.

The penalty is two to four years in Jeffersonville penitentiary. Williams will file bond for appeal.

TRADE BOARD TO HEAR OIL MEN TOMORROW

Federal Commission Ready for Last Phase of Gasolene Inquiry.

The Federal Trade Commission tomorrow will enter on the last stage of its effort to find the "reason why" for the high price of gasolene.

The commission's hearings on this subject are to begin tomorrow. Nearly two score oil companies will have representatives present to give their views on the soaring price of automobile fuel.

Commissioner Harris will conduct the hearings. They will be held at the Department of Commerce and may last for several weeks.

For some months the commission has been engaged in a study of this question. Since this began the cost of gasolene has varied little. The report is formulated and awaits the inclusion of the ideas of the oil men about the situation.

When the hearings are ended not much time will elapse before the report is sent to Congress.

Children's Day.

Children's Day was observed at the Mt. Pleasant Congregational Church today. The Rev. Clarence A. Vincent preached a sermon especially appropriate for children, a large number of boys and girls were baptized and a special musical program was rendered.

FITS We have sworn state ments from patients cured of Fits, Epilep sy, Falling Sickness or Convulsions by free sample of Dr Roof's remedy. We PAY EXPRESSAGE FREE TRIAL BOTTLE if you CUT OUT and RETURN THIS AD your letter. Hundreds of testimonials on file. Give age and full particulars. Dr. F. HARVEY ROOF CO. Dept. A. 1471. Sta. N, New York

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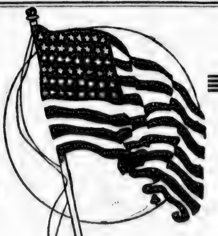

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Those Who Walk In Darkness
A Complete Novelette By Perley Poore Sheehan

It is but one of the many features of this week's issue, which is beyond all question the biggest dime's worth on the stand. Its interest never lags—from first to last it holds the attention of the reader. Read it, together with the other good stories

In the June 10th Issue of
All-Story Weekly
THE MAGAZINE OF SURPRISES

OTHER FEATURES

Trader Brayne's Daughter
By Vance Palmer

Beginning another absorbingly interesting serial by this popular author. A series of remarkable adventures transpire on the west coast of British India, which are as strange as they are unusual. In four installments—the second part will be published next week.

On The Ham-and-Egg Circuit
By John G. Miller, Jr.

Rather an unusual title, isn't it? Just as its peculiarity catches your eye, so will the story hold your interest.

Professor Barker Harrison-Tartar
By Achmed Abdullah

If you read much modern fiction you will have learned something about the theory of reincarnation. A new and startling application of this theory is to be found in this story, written by a master of Eastern lore.

10c--At All Newsstands Now--10c

The Mysteries of Myra

An Inspiring Novel and Motion Picture Drama

Written by Hereward Carrington.

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Dramatized by Charles W. Goddard.

(Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.)

Myra Maynard, a beautiful heiress, is the victim of an occult conspiracy; a society of black magicians, under the leadership of a master of psychic art, are endeavoring to cause her death in order to obtain possession of her father's estate. Dr. Payson Alden, a physician who has devoted his life to the study of the mystic, saves her from suicide while under the hypnotic influence of the band. With the aid of Prof. Haji, Dr. Alden gains admission to the underground meeting place of the Black Order. He is condemned to death for his interference, but is saved from live burial by his confederate. He reaches the Maynard home in time to save Myra from death by poisonous gases liberated from some toy balloons. Arthur Varney, a wealthy clubman, who is a suitor for Myra's hand, has been in league with the conspirators, but the watchfulness of Dr. Alden has thus far thwarted his efforts.

CHAPTER XXII.

The Lost Trail.

DR. ALDEN was more determined than ever to end the activities of the Black Order.

"I must get the authorities on this case now, for individual work will do no good," he told Haji, that morning. "You can go to the order meeting if you will, but be wary. For I intend to have the police raid it as soon as they can be stirred into definite action."

The Hindoo left Alden's residence, his heart troubled by misgivings. Yet he was faithful to his mission; there was no fear in heart.

The miraculous escape of the physician from the clutches of the devil worshipers was the subject of more than one whispered conference. Yet at the command of the evil pontiff, the master of ceremonies forbade any general discussion among the brethren. The master had already planned a method in which to trap the unknown traitor within their ranks, craftily as his work had been concealed.

Haji reported to the leader of ceremonies, and with several other members was sent out upon certain missions to remote parts of the city. Accordingly, it was not until some time later that he knew of the secret developments.

Payson Alden, after studying a plan of action from every angle, at last walked to the police station for an interview with the captain. At first his story was scouted.

"Sure, guv'nor, you're crazy! There ain't nothing like that going on in this district. Why, we're up here on the edge of the city. And that old house you tell about hasn't been occupied for twenty years."

"You're mistaken, officer," insisted Alden. "Just look at these bruises on my arms. I'm still stiff from the fight I had with them. If you will send some men with me, I'll prove to you how possible it is."

The officer grudgingly summoned two plain clothes men, who accompanied Alden toward the deserted farm. A stretch of woodland had to be passed before they came to the stone buildings.

Alden and his companions failed to observe two skulking figures peering at them from the shelter of some evergreens. One of the men waved his arm with a peculiar gesture, looking back toward a small culvert.

The signal was repeated by another watcher, so that his action was observed by a man peering from behind a stone wall through binoculars. This man disappeared abruptly.

As they prowled about through the thicket Alden finally located the hollow-trunked tree through which he had gained entry to the subterranean chambers of the order.

"There, officers," declared the doctor. "You see the marks where I was dragged out. This leads directly to the meeting rooms."

The detectives studied the place carefully. One of them cautiously entered, and sent the ray of a pocket light into the cavity.

"Yes, there are steps. This is a sure lead," said he. "Jim, you go back and tell the chief that we've got the place. Bring a bunch of the reserves. And don't go to sleep, either, for these birds will begin to fly south!"

The other man hurried away.

The detective plied the physician with questions. Alden limited his descriptions of the inner workings of the order to the assertion that the men had tried to kill him for some unknown reason. He volunteered nothing about the connection of Myra Maynard with the plot.

It was fully half an hour before the other detective returned with the captain and an automobile patrol wagon filled with uniformed reserves. The captain himself ordered them to surround the old building.

"When I blow the whistle, close in from all sides and I'll watch this getaway here myself!" he cried.

The bluecoats hurried to obey. With a drawn revolver the officer waited at the old tree.

Without any preliminary warning and even as they peered anxiously into the tree hole, a terrific explosion shook the ground beneath their feet.

The blast came from the interior of the subterranean stairway its force so terrific that the police captain and the doctor were both knocked to the ground. There was another concussion, and as the two startled men scrambled up, they were astounded to observe a continual line of heaving earth as foot after foot of the tunnel was blown up.

"Come! We'll get to the center!" was Alden's call to the captain as he ran unsteadily toward the old stone house.

But they were too late. Already the others were standing back from the structure helplessly fuming in rage. The roof had been blown off, the flames were pouring from the ramshackle windows.

A final explosion sent the remnants of the structure to the ground, as the flaming embers showered about them and drove them into a disconsolate ring about the place. Search as they would, they could find nothing left of the secret meeting place. The dynamite arrangements of the master had been perfect.

"Well, there's nothing for us to do here," said the captain, after his men had vainly ransacked the entire property. Not a soul was in sight, and the pursuit was a failure. "We're going back to the station house, and you'd better give up. Keep in touch with me, if anything turns up or you need protection. I didn't believe you at first, and even now I don't get the idea of this gang. But, I'll be wide awake when I can help you."

The doctor shook hands with him, and lit a cigarette.

"No, I don't need any protection. I've got my revolver, and can look after myself in the open," he said. "But I'll just look around here a bit more. I may find some clues that lead elsewhere. Good-by."

The policemen and detectives disappeared.

Alden sat down on the remnant of an old stone bench to ponder over the mystery.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The New Campaign.

MYRA MAYNARD paced the floor of her bedroom anxiously, as she studied the little French clock on her chiffonier.

"Dr. Alden is late again with his telephone call. I must try to reach him," her thoughts ran. "Oh, if we could only drop this whole pursuit and have peace. I hardly believe that revenge is worth the terrible risk he is running."

Her maid came upstairs to announce the arrival of a visitor. It was Arthur Varney.

His dark eyes glowed with pleasure and renewed confidence as he greeted the girl. But their conversation was interrupted by Willis, the butler, who had gone to answer a ring at the front door.

"Miss Myra, here's a letter which I found under the door. When I opened it there was not a soul 'n sight," he said, anxiously but politely trying to scrutinize the unusual handwriting on the black envelope.

A curious smile seemed to twist Varney's voluptuous lips for an instant, and Willis shot him a questioning glance. But the expression died away, and the well-bred calmness on the visitor's face disarmed the momentary suspicion.

Myra's fingers trembled as she tore open the envelope, to draw out the black paper message within.

The lustrous blue eyes dilated in sheer horror when she saw in the lower corner, in place of a signature, the outline of two fists, with thumbs upturned, drawn in white ink! It was the sign of the devil worshippers!

"Oh, mother!" she screamed, averting her glance before she dared to finish the message which was written above the dread symbol.

"What is it, dear?" and Mrs. Maynard's heart sank in apprehension as she rushed into the drawing room.

"Look! Look! That awful sign—and see what it says!" cried the girl, weakly.

Her mother took the black paper with a skeptical frown. She adjusted her reading glasses, and then suddenly evinced more of a shock than the young girl.

The massage was simple.

"Myra Maynard:

"When you receive this letter, Payson Alden will be beyond human aid'."

Then she handed it to Varney, who smiled at its words.

"It's some joke," he said. "Perhaps Alden sent it."

He looked down again at the symbol, and then his expression changed.

"By George, I forgot. I heard that the police had tried to raid this Black Order under Alden's directions. A patrolman told me about it as I came uptown—all the police are talking about it now. Perhaps this is connected with it. Didn't Alden say this was their sign?"

"Yes, yes!" and Myra caught the paper to study it again. She rushed to the telephone.

I will try to reach him at his home. If that fails, we must do something else at once," she declared, jigging the receiver impatiently.

The servant at the physician's home said that the doctor had not telephoned, nor had he been seen around the house since early morning.

"Oh, Arthur! What can I do? Can't you advise something?" Myra cried, helpless as a wounded bird, as she turned her plaintive eyes toward the half-sneering countenance of the club man.

"Well, if he's in trouble it is of his own making. You know I warned you both of fooling with this sort of stuff. I have heard that people lose their reason and their health, in this case he may have lost his life, by intruding in what was none of his business!"

There was an undercurrent of hate in his voice which did not go unobserved by Myra.

"Arthur, you must not be so bitter. He is a friend of mine, and saved my life more than once, at terrible effort and risk. If you are as good a friend as you say you are, you will help me," she pleaded.

"Oh, well, I don't like the fellow, he is a bore. But, he's human. I'd advise calling up the police station, to learn if they have seen him."

The lieutenant at the desk gruffly answered her call. When the girl mentioned her name his manner changed, and he called the captain to the instrument.

"Have you seen anything of Dr. Payson Alden?" she demanded. "Was he injured this morning?"

"No, Miss Maynard. We came very near being blown to bits by those crooks, but we couldn't find a sign of them. The doctor stuck around there just the same, after we gave up."

"Well' hasn't he telephoned you? Is that all you know about him?" she asked.

"Yes, Miss Maynard, the last we saw of Dr. Alden he was prowling around near the ruins."

Myra repeated the vague news to her mother and the visitor.

Varney repressed a smile of satisfaction, and then shook his head in assumed apprehension.

"That's terrible. If he is alone there, and these men actually did blow up the place, there is no telling what may have happened to him. Perhaps that letter was true after all."

Myra walked the floor tugging at her gown in nervous abstraction. As she approached the window to look down the driveway of the beautiful old estate Varney approached her.

"I have an idea,' he said in a low tone. "Come into the library away from your mother, and I will tell you."

Making an excuse she led the way to another room, while her mother wondered vaguely at the meaning of it all. Mrs. Maynard was floundering these days in her vain efforts to understand Myra's psychology. The girl had changed so greatly since the odd meeting with Dr. Payson Alden. Her growing interest in him was patent to the instinct of a mother, and, despite her disapproval of the occult experiments, Mrs. Maynard could not combat her own growing liking for the physician.

As they reached the seclusion of the other room Myra turned her nervous face to Varney.

"What do you think we can do?"

"Well," and his words were given with studied slowness. "You remember the doctor claimed that he hypnotized you, and that he projected your spirit or your. * * * What was it he called it?"

"My astral body' prompted Myra. "What has that to do with his danger now?

Varney nodded impressively.

"That's just it! A whole lot. Now, tell me truthfully, was it actually the case Did your astral body really go somewhere? Is all that rubbish true?"

"Why, of course. I actually saw the men in the Black Order, just as though it were a dream. I left my own body, asleep there in the chair. I seemed to float through space and then found myself in a black room, with men kneeling on the floor, chanting some terrible words which I could not understand."

She trembled at the recollection.

"Yes," she continued. "It is almost unbelievable, Arthur. But it actually happened. I suffered, oh, such agonies! And I saw that horrible face of a man, with his thumbs upturned. Every day I see that face appear—sometimes on the glass of picture frames, sometimes in my goldfish globe! And I saw a vision of Dr. Alden in his bedroom, suffering from that queer gas which came from the plant, the night he stayed in the house here to protect us. Oh, Arthur, it is all too real—it is a waking nightmare!"

"Then it was the hypnotism which sent your astral body on its journey?" queried Varney, ingenuously.

"Yes! I saw the other visions without it, but when I took the spirit trip the doctor hypnotized me."

"Ah, there's the answer, then. Why don't you let me try to hypnotize you, and perhaps your astral can go hunt him up and save him?" he volunteered.

The girl shook her head slowly.

"No; you couldn't do it. It is a very scientific matter, you know, Arthur."

"Well, why not let me try? I've seen it done several times in exhibitions," he persisted. "You ought not to stop at anything that might save Aiden."

This appeal succeeded, as Arthur Varney craftily intended it should do.

"Well, we can try. Perhaps I am more susceptible to it now, and can do it myself, to help," said Myra, as she sat down in a big lounging chair.

Varney looked into her eyes with all the strength of his soul; he made the curious hand passes with which the first stage of hypnotism is induced.

Myra, relaxed and subjective, kept her eyes fixed upon his, but the experiment was a failure.

"It's no use, Arthur. I'm too nervous," she said, despairingly. Then a new inspiration came to her aid. "But there is a wonderful machine in Dr. Alden's laboratory. We might be able to use that if you wish to go there with me."

Varney nodded enthusiastically.

"Splendid!" he cried. "Now that we are started we should carry the idea out. But how can we get in?"

"I'll call the car and we can be there in a few minutes. The maid will surely remember me and will let us wait for the doctor," she declared. I'll get my hat and coat right away."

'VARNEY PAUSED - HAD HE SUCCEEDED ?

In a few minutes they had slipped out of the house, unobserved by her mother. The family automobile carried them to Alden's house, and they were soon in the physician's waiting room.

"We will wait until Dr. Alden returns," Myra told the servant, who nodded and withdrew.

"Now, where is the laboratory?" asked Varney.

"Upstairs," replied the girl. "I had a wonderful time there before. I wonder if we couldn't go up now? If the maid has gone it will be all right?"

"Yes," and Varney looked at his watch significantly. "It is high time. I'll look out."

The hallway outside the reception room was empty, and, under Myra's leadership, they hurried up the steps to the big room which contained the psychic apparatus of the investigator.

"But the door is locked!"

Myra tried it vainly, in disappointment. She drooped her head.

"We cannot do a thing," she said sadly.

"I'm not so sure. I have a bunch of keys," and Varney's lips gave the bare suggestion of that cunning smile. "Perhaps one of them may fit. Who knows?"

He tried several before the lock finally yielded, as he pushed the door open.

"Well, wasn't that a lucky coincidence!" he exclaimed. "I guess the fates must be with us after all. Now I wonder what sort of a place it is?"

Myra hurried in, while her companion followed, with a touch of apprehension in his manner as he gazed about at the castle of the arch-enemy of the Black Lodge.

"Well, and where is the hypnotizing machine?" asked Arthur Varney.

"There, that big apparatus with the mirrors. I remember that the doctor started it with some electrical switches," said the girl.

Varney stepped forward to examine the machine with feigned ignorance. Myra began to explain its workings to him, but he looked at his watch once more and interrupted her.

"I believe I saw one of these manipulated once before," he said. "You sit down in a chair and look up when the lights are on and the wheels begin to revolve?"

"Yes, that the idea," answered the girl. "And I'll sit down now, for the sooner we can try it the better."

"I agree with you," echoed Arthur Varney, smiling. "There's no time to lose!

And as Myra assumed an easy position in the chair, facing the great wheel, covered with its mirror planes, Varney, by another coincidence, managed to touch the right electrical connections to adjust the apparatus.

The big circle tilted forward and the wheels began to move more and more rapidly. The lights glowed and any one observing the eager Myra would have imagined that Varney was quite familiar with the mechanism.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Master's Revenge.

ALDEN, finally despairing of any new clues, looked at his watch and decided to report the strange occurrence to Myra.

He strode nervously across the uneven ground to the roadway. As he quickened his pace upon the more level thoroughfare, a small boy riding a bicycle tinkled his bell and stopped abruptly.

The youngster looked at him quizzically and then called out sharply.

"Hey, there; are you Mister Alden?"

The physician whirled about in surprise.

"Who do you want?"

"What's yer first name?" was the shrewd inquiry, by way of reply.

"Who sent you to ask for me?"

"That's my business," responded the lad. "What's your first name? I know what I got paid for."

The doctor smiled. The boy, despite his juvenile cocksureness, was the possessor of an honest grin, and Alden instinctively trusted him.

"Well, my name is Payson Alden. If you have anything to tell me don't hesitate. Here is my card," and he proffered the youngster the tiny square of pasteboard.

The boy grinned and handed him an envelope.

"A guy that looked just the same as a Chinaman—only different—he gave he that. He told me what you looked like or I wouldn't a-given it to you at that, for he gave me a dollar."

"Thanks very much," and Alden added to the boy's wealth as he nervously tore open the missive.

The message was in the familiar handwriting of his faithful Hindoo friend. Alden breathed a sigh of relief, for he had feared that perhaps Haji had been engulfed in the crumbling subterranean passageways.

"They have moved to new quarters. Meet me at noon near the overhanging willow," read the hasty script.

"Well, not long to wait then," muttered Alden, as he strode over the hillside to the appointed place.

He sat down with a wary eye in all directions. The time dragged miserably. His thoughts reverted to the beautiful girl whose fortunes had become so oddly, yet so inspiringly, entangled with his own. He wondered what might be her thoughts at this moment, and whether Myra were as warmly interested as the apparently increasing cordiality seemed to indicate.

Again he looked at his watch.

"Late! This is the first time you ever failed to keep an appointment with friend Haji!" he muttered, anxiously.

Another half hour passed.

Fears for Myra's safety began to torment him. It was cool, yet the nervous perspiration bedewed his forehead.

He walked down toward the edge of the stream, nervously tossing pebbles into it.

Then he saw it!

Floating down with the current was a half-submerged human body. Alden ran into the water a few feet and clutched at it.

He drew it to the bank and turned the corpse face upward, the bitter tears springing to his eyes.

It was faithful Haji, who had sacrificed his life in the cause of "white magic."

"Poor fellow!" he muttered, as he tested the various signs of life.

The Hindoo was stone dead.

As he tore open the shirt to examine his heart he saw a peculiar burn upon the dark-skinned breast. It was the devil worshiper's sign, oddly branded on the flesh.

How death had actually occurred was a mystery, yet the expression upon the dead man's face proved that it must have been one of horrible torture, mentally, if not physically.

"I must tell the police!" and Alden sprang to his feet and hurried to the station house.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed the captain, "I thought this business was quieted down for the day."

"Captain, I must be hurrying to the Maynard home to see if any developments have occurred there. This business is not quieting down—it is just beginning to flare up. We may expect the worst of everything from now on!"

And as the policemen rushed a patrol wagon to bear the body of the dead man to the coroner's office, Alden hurried with increasing apprehension to Myra's home.

CHAPTER XXV.

The New Astral Intrigue.

"WHERE is Miss Myra, Charles?" asked Mrs. Maynard of the chauffeur, as he brought the car to a stop before the house.

"Why, I just took her with Mr. Varney, ma'am, over to Dr. Alden's house," was the reply.

"What is she doing there?" she demanded. "I don't understand this at all."

"I don't know, ma'am," faltered Charles, scratching his head, as he tried to remember some of the things he had overheard. "Oh, yes, she said something about a laboratory, I think, ma'am."

Mrs. Maynard gave an ejaculation of alarm.

"That terrible place again! And she promised me that she would not go there again under any circumstances. Charles, as soon as I get my wraps I want you to take me right there."

Mrs. Maynard was soon speeding through the crowded streets, urging the driver to more haste. At last they reached the physician's house.

"I want to see my daughter!" she demanded, trembling with a presentiment of further trouble.

"Yes, ma'am. She's in the waiting room," replied the servant who answered the ring. "Step right in, please."

The room was empty, to the surprise of both!

"The laboratory!" cried Mrs. Maynard. "Take me to the laboratory at once. That is where she is."

"But, ma'am, the doctor never allows anyone there," objected the woman. "That's strictly against his orders. The young lady couldn't be there."

"I'm going to see just the same!" declared Mrs. Maynard, as she hurried toward the stairs.

Within the darkened laboratory Arthur Varney stood regarding the inert figure of Myra as she sat limp in the easy chair, before the revolving wheel. He heard an excited knocking at the locked door.

"Who can that be?" he muttered, as he threw his cigarette aside. "If it's the doctor——"

"Myra! Myra! Open this door!" called Mrs. Maynard.

He sprang to the levers controlling the hypnotizing machine and stopped its motion.

"Myra! Myra! Arthur Varney, let me in!"

Varney looked exultingly at the girl, and then rumpling his hair and taking off his coat, he went to the door.

"Arthur! What do you mean?' began Mrs. Maynard, as he swung the door open.

She caught a glimpse of the still figure in the chair and gave a piercing scream.

"What are you doing to my daughter?" she cried. "Myra! Myra!"

The girl's eyes were closed, her head rigid, her fingers tensely gripping the arms of the chair.

Mrs. Maynard clutched the cold hand, and burst into helpless sobbing. The girl's face was more tense, more pallied than during that earlier hypnotic seance.

"Oh, she's dying!" moaned Mrs. Maynard. "Why did you let her do this, Arthur? You, her friend, my friend?"

Varney rubbed his forehead in assumed desperation.

"I've tried every way!" he said. "I'm not able to wake her up. She said she wanted to be hypnotized and she turned on the machine itself. Why, it nearly affected me!"

The girl's mother sobbed, while the frightened maid servant ran down the stairs, to escape from the terrors of this eerie room.

The unconscious girl's lips twitched in mute echo of some spiritual suffering.

"Oh, she's in agony," murmured Mrs. Maynard. "If we could only reach Dr. Alden"

Arthur Varney shook his head with an ill-concealed leer

"I think he is otherwise engaged by this time!" he remarked calmly. "We'll just have to wait for developments, I'm afraid, my dear Mrs. Maynard.

Dr. Payson Alden was indeed otherwise engaged, but in a far more animated manner than Varney supposed.

The physician had reached the Maynard home in a taxicab. He ran up the steps eagerly, hoping that Myra would greet him. But it was Willis' anxious countenance which appeared at the door.

"Miss Maynard?"

"Sorry, sir, but I thought she was with you, sir. She went over to your house, with Mr. Varney. She said something about your laboratory, so Mrs. Maynard told me, sir."

Alden's eyes opened wide. This was the biggest surprise of the day, Myra and Arthur Varney going to his laboratory, when he was confident that the girl knew he was not there!

"What! Am I crazy or is she?" he exclaimed.

"I'm sorry, sir, I don't know, sir!" apologized Willis, with an embarrassed cough.

"Well, there's only one thing to do!" And with the words, Alden ran down the steps. He was just in time to catch the departing taxicab, and he ordered the driver to make speed.

The machine whizzed up to the house, and Alden sprang out, tossing the man a yellow-backed bill, without waiting for change. Into the house he sped, using his latch key, and straight up the stairs.

As he reached the upper floor, he paused outside his laboratory door, as a precaution. He heard the oily accents of Arthur Varney.

"I tell you it won't do any good to start the machine again, Mrs. Maynard. We must just wait and see what happens!"

"Then I'll start it myself!" cried the good lady, tearfully. "If Dr. Alden could only be reached."

"Well, he can't be reached. And I doubt if the fool could understand the case, anyway," was the impatient retort.

Alden stepped into the room, his eyes blazing.

"I understand more than you think I do, Varney," he snapped, as he ran to the girl's side. The astonished interloper stepped back as though he were expecting a blow.

But Alden had his mind on only one thing. He knelt by the girl's side and began to manipulate her wrists.

Then, this failing to bring results, he commanded, begged, and almost shouted an order for her to "Wake up!" It amounted to naught.

Little did Mrs. Maynard and the doctor dream as they worked over the unconscious girl that at this very moment her astral and that of the dread Black Master could be seen floating hand in hand in the clouds of incense which swirled above the altar of the Devil Worshipers.

Even Varney, ignorant of the full extent of his villainy, was not aware that a strange transposition of souls was taking place and that when Myra awoke it would be with the spirit of another animating her body.

"If the machine made her go away, it ought to make her come back," persisted Mrs. Maynard. "Oh, doctor, try anything, please, for poor little Myra's sake."

The physician walked to the levers. His keen eye noted the butts of some cigarettes on the floor beside it. Even in that preoccupied moment he realized that Varney must have been slow in the hypnotic work to have had time for smoking three!

"Why not run the machine backward? Maybe that will reverse the action," ventured Mrs. Maynard.

Alden was about to turn the advice aside, when something prompted him to follow it.

The lights were soon glittering once more in the whirring reflectors. The trio watched the unconscious face with varying emotions. Suddenly the eyelids stirred, and were lifted, ever so weakly.

"Hurrah!" cried Alden. "Mrs. Maynard, you've made a great psychic discovery!"

"I don't care about that," cried the mother, kissing the wan face. "All I want is my daughter back!"

"She's back!" exclaimed Varney, and there was disappointment on h's astonished features.

Myra stirred and now looked at her mother, with a strange expression.

"Myra, darling, don't you know me, child?" cried Mrs. Maynard, fearfully.

"Yes, it's mother! Isn't it?"

Alden was puzzled at the speech, and even at the curious stiffness of her tones.

"Myra, come out of this dreadful place. You must come home at once."

Varney put on his coat, and picked up his hat and walking stick. He cast a sullen glare at Alden, who was studying him with fingers which itched for a grip upon that comfortable, heavy neck.

"Yes, I think she had better go home and rest. And you two had better go home alone together Mrs. Maynard," said the doctor.

"No, no, I don't think of their going without an escort," objected Varney.

"Very well: I will be in the posse, then," observed the physician. There was a grim set to his lips as he followed the group downstairs and into the automobile.

Alden was watching Myra with a shade of misgiving, which he could not quite crystallize into a definite suspicion.

"She walks oddly," he mused, as though she were not used to that skirt."

When Myra stepped into the car she tripped over the border of her gown, and would have fallen backward had not Varney caught her arm.

"I'm so clumsy," she laughed, with embarrassment. "My head still aches."

Alden sat bisde Myra.

"What did you see, Miss Maynard, while you were in the trance?" he asked.

The girl looked at him with a puzzling laugh in the blue eyes.

"Not a thing!"

"Um-m!" muttered Alden, thoughtfully, and made no further comment, until they reached home.

Varney escorted Mrs. Maynard into the library, while Myra paused in the vestibule, to allow Alden to lift her cloak from her shoulders.

Suddenly the girl turned toward the physician and with face upturned to him, put her hands upon his shoulders.

With a languorous look in her eyes—an expression absolutely foreign to every memory of those unusually demure depths—the girl spoke in a low tone:

"I love you!"

Alden stepped back in astonishment; and then the meaning of the sudden declaration overwhelmed him.

"Miss—Myra—what—do—you say?" he asked, bewildered.

"I love you, Payson."

The girl raised her lips coquettishly. She clasped her arms behind his shoulders, as their lips met. Alden was facing the mirror of the antique mahogany hat tree, as they stood there. The supreme moment of bliss—the first kiss—seemed disappointing to him somehow. He looked over her shoulder and say their two figures reflected in the mirror.

It was not the face of Myra Maynard which lay upon his shoulder.

Even as his lips brushed the glorious hair, he saw the face of a man.

It was the sardonic, crime-gnarled visage of the Master of the Black Order!

The slim white hands were gliding behind his shoulders toward the revolver which protruded from his hip pocket. Petrified with horror, the physician groped mentally.

In that instant the revolver was snatched, and the muzzle pressed against his back.

Alden sprang aside and grasped the slender wrist.

The report of the shot, which shattered the mirror, brought Varney and Mrs. Maynard into the vestibule.

The face of the girl was dove-like in its innocence and gentle surprise.

"What is it?" cried Varney.

"Why did you fire that revolver?" demanded Mrs. Maynard.

Alden was holding the revolver. From its muzzle still trailed a thin line of smoke. He looked at the weapon which he snatched away so opportunely.

"Miss Maynard tried to kill me!" he cried, hardly hearing them, as he stared into the girl's eyes.

Myra shook her head and looked pityingly, almost scornfully, at the physician.

"Poor Dr. Alden," she murmured, with a laugh. "He is so upset. We mustn't pay any attention to what he says."

A great light burst into the mystified mind of the physician.

"It is not Myra's fault! She did not try to kill me."

"Of course not," said the girl. "Dr. Alden, you will begin to bore me before long, I am afraid."

"You are not Myra" cried the physician, pointing an accusing finger, which trembled with emotion. "The soul of the master of the Black Order has entered Myra Maynard's body!"

The girl laughed and Varney turned to follow her mother as the two women went into the drawing room. Alden stared after them, a thousand terrifying fears for the real Myra whirring through his brain!

(To be continued next Sunday.)

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The Mysteries of Myra

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(Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.)

Myra Maynard, a beautiful heiress, persecuted by a mysterious band of devil-worshippers known as the Black Order, and ruled by a cunning genius called the High Master, is on the verge of suicide while in a somnambulistic trance, when she is saved by Dr. Payson Alden, a brilliant young physician, who has devoted his life to investigations of the psychic. Alden has learned through his studies of the plot to kill the girl in order that her fortune may revert, by a secret will of her father, to the Black Order, of which he was a covert member. His efforts to protect her are continually endangered by the work of Arthur Varney, the suitor favored by Myra's mother, who is in league with the High Master. By clever finessing against the knaveries of the evil order, Aldan has managed to apply the modern discoveries in hypnotism, mind reading, electricity, chemistry and spiritualism in such a way as to thwart their plans.

The first attempt on the girl's life having failed, the High Master and his aides endeavor to slay the girl by cutting the "astral chord," during a seance in which the girl's soul, under hypnotic influence of Alden, is being projected to search in the ether world for the evildoers. The power of prayer saves her life when science fails. A poisonous Oriental flower is sent to her bedchamber, but Alden saves her at the bare escape from death himself. Balloons filled with deadly vapors are shrewdly smuggled into her room, but after escaping from the clutches of the Black Order, who have imprisoned him, the doctor rescues Myra once more. With the aid of a fellow investigator, Haji the Hindoo, Payson Alden discovers the lair of the devil-worshipers and escapes from them at the cost of his friend's life. After trying vainly to set the police on the trail of the scoundrels, Alden finds the entire network of underground meeting rooms dynamited by the criminals.

He returns to Myra's home to learn that at the suggestion of Arthur Varney she has gone to the physician's laboratory. There she has used Alden's automatic hypnotizing machine to project her astral to search for the physician whom Varney has reported slain. After a tremendous effort Alden and Mrs. Maynard succeed in bringing life to the body of the unconscious girl. Upon her return to the Maynard mansion Alden sees, in the reflection of a mirror, the face of the High Master, instead of that of the girl whom he has learned to love. He prevents her from shooting him with his own revolver, and declares to the incredulous mother that the soul of the great criminal has taken possession of Myra's body.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The Surprising Myra.

It was a changed girl who greeted Mrs. Maynard the next morning at breakfast. Instead of the usual good morning kiss from the rosebud mouth the tender caress of the gentle arms about her mother's shoulders, a cynical smile appeared which disturbed Mrs. Maynard more than she was willing to admit.

"How do you feel, dear?" was her question. "Yesterday was a terrible day, Myra, and I do hope that you are feeling stronger now."

"I never felt finer in my life. Where's the food?"

The girl looked at her mother to see a look of bewilderment on her face. This was not her usual manner of talking. As Willis, the butler, entered the dining room he seemed to sense something unusual.

"Hurry up there, you fool," was Myra's next remark. "I'm hungry as a wolf."

"Yes—yes, Miss!" and Willis stepped forward with forced alacrity. He awkwardly dropped a roll from his tray. The sharp blue eyes missed nothing.

"Stupid idiot! What sort of a hash house did you learn your trade in?" cried the girl.

"Why Myra, dear, I never heard you talk like that before," objected the astounded Mrs. Maynard. "You must have passed a dreadful night, but that should not alter your politeness."

The big eyes narrowed as with sudden realization.

"I'm so sorry, dear mother. I did not mean to be irritable. I have, indeed, been unhappy all night. This stupid Dr. Alden is getting on my nerves, I presume. I certainly want him to stay away from the huose from now on. If he telephones or tries to call just tell him that I am not at home to him."

Myra began to eat with a startling eagerness. Her mother was surprised, then pleased; for the girl was usually a very light eater.

"Well, you are a naughty girl," she said, when the servant had gone to the kitchen for the next course, "but you must control your nerves. I am going shopping today, and I wish that you would take a complete rest."

Myra looked up thoughtfully.

"Yes, dear. A good idea. I may go downtown later myself. And by the way, where did I leave my bankbooks? I am so forgetful nowadays."

"Why, in the library table drawer, of course. Really, my dear, I do not understand you this morning."

The meal was completed in silence. Myra seemed busy with her own thoughts, until the telephone bell tinkled from the adjacent library.

The butler hurried out of the room and returned with a queer expression on his usually placed face. Myra did not overlook it.

"A gentleman wants to speak to you, Mrs. Maynard. He says it is very important and that he insists on your answering the telephone at once, ma'am."

"Who was talking?" insisted the girl.

"I don't know, Miss!" faltered the servant.

Mrs. Maynard walked into the other room, as Myra directed a malevolent glance at the unfortunate Willis.

"You are a liar!" were her surprising words, and Willis beat a decorous retreat.

Mrs. Maynard took up the instrument, apprehensively. Then she showed greater surprise.

"Why, it is Dr. Alden! Willis said that he didn't recognize your voice; that's strange—he certainly should by time."

She looked askance at Myra, whose face was wreathed in smiles for the instant, only to change to a scowl as her mother turned toward the telephone again.

The words of the physician, over the wire, caused further bewilderment to the good lady.

"Mrs. Maynard, don't talk for a minute. Don't say a thing at that end of the phone until you get my warning. That is not your daughter! Listen, now—there has been a great psychic crime committed! It is the spirit of a strange and wicked man which looks at you out of Myra's eyes. Beware!"

Mrs. Maynard sniffed.

"Dr. Alden, I believe you are losing your senses. You speak ridiculously. I believe you are crazy and I do not wish to talk with you any more. Good-by!"

And she hung up the receiver with a jerk.

"More of Alden's foolishness?" asked Myra, eagerly.

"Yes, but I don't believe it," replied her mother with vague uncertainty in her voice. She rose to leave the room.

"What did he say, dear? There's no reason why you shouldn't tell me," persuaded the girl.

"Nothing important, Myra. Nothing worth bothering you about; you have had your ears filled with enough of this nonsense already." Her mother walked out, leaving the girl standing with clenched hands and a demoniac expression of rage on her smooth oval features.

"Well, it is time to get busy at once, or that fool will spoil everything," muttered the girl as she turned toward the library table.

It took but an instant to bring forth the bankbooks which were within. She lifted up the first—it was her mother's. She tossed this aside with a look of regret. The next one was in the name of Myra Maynard—it showed a big balance of credit.

She hurried around the table to the telephone and in another moment was talking to the bookkeeper at the bank.

"How does my account stand, please? This is Myra Maynard speaking."

"Oh, yes, I recognize your voice, Miss Maynard. A pleasant day, isn't it? Well, just a minute and I'll look it up to see how your checks are coming in."

There was a silence, after which the agreeable voice of the bank attendant came back over the wire.

"Miss Maynard, your bank balance to date is just $2,500. Is there anything more I can do for you?"

"Not now, thank you. Good-by," and the girl hung up the receiver.

She turned to the drawer again, rummaging about until she found the check book. She drew out one of the blanks, and another search brought forth some canceled checks. She filled out the blank for the sum of $2,500, payable to "Cash," and then, after a moment's hesitation, began to copy her own signature from the bottom of an older check!

Just as this was laborously completed and blotted, Myra's pet dog came racing into the room with wagging tail. As the animal came near her he suddenly stopped. The hair rose stiffly on his neck, and he began to growl, as he retreated toward the door.

"Come here," called the girl, nervously.

But the dog began to bark furiously, showing his white teeth menacingly. Myra's hand went to a book, as a weapon, just as Willis rushehd into the room.

"I don't think he likes you any more, Miss Myra," observed the servant, catching the animal by his collar.

"Well, there's no love lost, then, for I don't like dogs," was the surprising response. "Take him out of the room, and keep him out!"

CHAPTER XXX.

The Betrothal.

As she entered her boudoir her cat arose from the seat of the armchair by the window, where it had been sunning itself. Its black back was arched and it began to spit. The girl approached it, with a hand outstretched to caress it, but the animal sprang wildly out of the chair, scuttling through the door to the corridor!

Myra Maynard laughed, as she turned toward her dresser and began to rummage through the drawers for a jewel box. There was a strange look of greedy joy on her face as she slipped the dinner rings on her fingers, placed a bracelet, set with diamonds, on her slim wrist, and pinned on two brooches. A sparkling lavalliere was slipped about her neck, and two pendants were put in the pocket of her heavy street coat.

The girl lifted her handbag, opened it with clumsy fingers, and placed a jeweled watch inside, as well as the folded check. Then she awkwardly donned the coat, man-fashion, buttoning it the wrong way!

Her hat was the next difficulty. This she put on at several angles, after apparently giving up hope about the identity of front or back!

While she was thus engaged, the doorbell rang. Dr. Payson Alden, alighting from a taxicab, had rushed into the vestibule breathlessly.

"Mrs. Maynard, I must speak to you at once," he cried.

"Doctor, you offend me with your remarks," began Myra's mother, but the physician stopped her impetuously:

"But, I must tell you. In Heaven's name, believe me! Myra's spirit is gone anu in its place—"

"That is ridiculous. We have had enough of this buffoonery," declared Mrs. Maynard in disgust. "I must ask you to leave, Mr. Alden."

Unseen by Alden, Myra had slipped down to the broad stairway to eavesdrop outside the door. Her face was twisted in an ugly, unfamiliar snarl, while her hands clenched in rage.

Before the doctor could continue, another visitor rang the doorbell. It was Arthur Varmey!

Debonair, suave, and self-confident as usual, he stepped into the vestibule with a look of well-bred surprise at the evident perturbation of the physician.

"Why, good morning, everyone! Nothing wrong, I trust," he began.

"Step into the music room, Arthur, I am bidding good-by to Dr. Alden," said Mrs. Maynard. The physician waited until his rival had passed out of earshot. He did not se the surprise on Varney's face as he found the girl listening on the other side of the closed door. She shut it hastily and bade him join her eavesdropping!

"I beg of you to believe me, Mrs. Maynard," the doctor continued. "I have tried so hard to save her, as you know."

"Good morning, Doctor Alden!" was the cold response.

"Oh, you are her mother. Won't you help me? Mrs. Maynard, I—I—love her!"

The door of the music room opened, and Myra Maynard emerged, leading Varney by the arm.

Alden looked at her as though he were seeing a ghost. As he drew back in alarm, Myra spoke:

"Mother, Arthur and I are engaged to be married!"

Even Varney showed his surprise, as he looked into the girl's eyes, and then at the other two. Mrs. Maynard clasped her hands nervously, and then tried to laugh.

"You are joking, my dear. You have not spoken of this to me before," she faltered.

"I won't permit this crime!" cried Alden, tense with fury. "This is not Myra herself, and you know it!"

Varney stepped in between the raging physician and the girl with outstretched arm.

"How dare you intrude?" he demanded. "I am engaged to Miss Myra Maynard, and I order you to leave this house before the servants put you out! If you don't I'll throw you out bodily!"

Alden's head drooped as he turned away. With one miserable look at the triumphant faces of Myra and Varney, he left the house, walking down the steps like an old man.

Myra smiled at Varney, who impulsively threw his arms about her. At last he had won his goal! Despite the cleverness of the astounding physician the work of months was success.

He leaned forward to claim the first kiss of their betrothal. But as he did so a surprising slap on the cheek greeted him.

"Oh Myra!" he cried, in an aggrieved tone. "You never treated me this way before. What has come over you, my dear—in this, the happiest minute of my life?"

"You fool!" an dthe girl's voice was oddly suggestive of another's that he remembered, despite the feminine quality. "You idiot, don't you know me? I'm the High Master!"

The girl, or as it really was the incarnation of the criminal genius of the Black Order, raised clenched hands to her cheeks with thumbs upturned on either side of the clustering blonde curls.

At this symbol of the devil-worshippers and the unmistakable manner of his superior, the startled Varney stepped back with fallen jaw. He dropped instinctively to his knees and gave the answering sign, his face awe-lit.

"Get up now before that woman comes back!" comanded the Master's spirit.

"Yes, Myra. I mean, Master!"

Varney was struggling to divine it all, but he groped clumsily, as he stared at the transformed face of the girl he loved.

How surprisingly hawk-like had become the usually gentle glance of those blue eyes. The rosebud lips were drawn to a firm, cruel line of tyrannical dominion, as the evil one continued.

"I have substituted the spirits of our astrals. My own body is in the meeting chamber. Myra Maynard's soul is imprisoned within it. This confounded Payson Alden guessed the truth too quickly. You must hurry to the place at once. Take my body to the house in the gorge—you know where. Not a sign of suspicion that all is not well here, understand—or you will pay as Haji did!"

Varney dropped his glance and nodded obediently, as "Myra" caught Varney's hand tenderly.

VARNEY WAS WARNED BY JEAN

"I must be going, my dear, for there's a little errand I must perform at a certain jeweler's! Good morning, Mrs. Maynard. You haven't given me your blessing yet."

"This has taken me by surprise,' said Mrs. Maynard tearfully. "I hardly know what to say, Arthur. But I trust Mra's judgment, and I know that you will be good to her."

"At last, Dr. Alden knows the truth, and has something to think about," observed "Myra," with a wink at Varney, who could not resist a smile at the double truth.

"Good-by, then. I'll be back later."

And not knowing whether to be happy or miserable, Varney went down the steps with a backward wave of his hand at the two women.

Mrs. Maynard was studying her daughter's face and suddenly looked up, in alarm, at her hat.

"My dear! What has come over you? You have your hat on backward, and your coat is buttoned wrong! I never saw you so untidy before."

"Just help me fix it, dear. I am so happy this morning," "Myra" laughed, "that I didn't stop to worry about little things. I'm going down to the shops to buy some little things for my trousseau."

"I'll go with you, as every mother should," but "Myra" intercepted with a pretty shake of the head.

"Not this time, dear. I want to surprise you with my good taste. I wish you would have the butler order a taxicab, so that I can go right away. We're wasting the whole morning with this sentimental foolishness," said the "girl."

Her mother shook her head in turn.

"I cannot understand you. Why should you want a taxicab when our own car is all ready? Where are your wits, my dear?"

"Oh, yes. I forgot about having a car," was the surprising reply.

Once at the bank, where the chauffeur had gone according to a curt direction, "Myra" left the car. "She" walked hesitatingly to the paying teller's wicket.

"Good morning, Miss Maynard."

"Good morning. Please cash this check, as I am in a hurry to do some shopping."

The paying teller took the slip of paper, then looked up startled. He had already reached for a large pile of bills, when he turned to the girl again.

"Miss Maynard, this does not look like your signature at all," he said, slowly.

"It is my signature. I want none of your opinions. Don't you know who I am? Hurry up."

"But Miss Maynard, I am only exerting the caution which I am paid for. This certainly isn't your signature."

"I am going to patronize another bank hereafter!" was the angry response of the "girl." A well dressed man, hatless, and evidently an official of the bank, was passing. He stopped at these surprising words, and then stepped forward.

"Why, Miss Maynard, what is the trouble?" he began, apologetically.

"The teller refuses to honor my signature," she began, sweetly, but the manager soon ended the difficulty by promptly O. K.ing the check. "Myra" murmured her thanks as the dumfounded clerk handed the money through the window. "She" bowed and walked to the safe deposit vaults, leaving the two men in a heated discussion by the wicket.

"Good morning," was "her" greeting there. "I have forgotten the number of my box. But I have the key. Will you please show it to me?"

"Certainly, Miss Maynard," and the attendant, after consulting his record book, walked ahead of her into the armor-plate safe room and opened the lock of her private box, with his own master key and one from the bunch which she handed him.

"Myra" drew out the metal box, retiring to one of the individual coupon rooms at the side. Alone here, "she" greedily lifted the cover and smiled at the jewelry which sparkled from within.

This safely changed to the handbag, the "girl" returned the box to its place, and with a more than usually amiable smile returned to the waiting car outside.

"I think I'll walk for a while. Tell mother that I will stay downtown for luncheon and not to worry about me," were the parting orders. "You can go home now."

CHAPTER XXXI.

A Soul In Jeopardy.

Within the somber surroundings of the Black Order's secret headquarters there was a strange unrest. In the main council room a group of the members were talking excitedly, but in subdued voices, with the leader of ceremonies.

"What has happened to the Master?" they demanded. "He has not told us what to do today, although yesterday he commanded that we come early for the day's labors."

"I dare not go inside without his command," replied the leader. "He strictly forbade doing that."

Just then the face of the High Master appeared through the black velvet curtains. He gazed fearsomely about him, and then with a strange, inarticulate cry, disappeared!

"Did you see that?" exclaimed one of the brethren, as they all fell to their knees.

"The Master has never before shown himself in this outer chamber! What can it mean, my brothers?" the leader demanded. "It bodes ill for us."

Before they could discuss it further, the Master's face reappeared. The men fell to their knees once more in the posture of adoration according to their ritual. Now, stranger still, he walked out among them as they tremblingly prostrated themselves.

Had any of them been looking upward a surprising expression might have been noticeable upon the face of the ruler. A gentler, softer look was upon the drawn features; his stride was uncertain, even effeminate, and he looked about him with a half frightened air.

The "Master" strode toward the incense tripod and knocked it over. The members cried in fear at this strange sacrilege.

Without a word the "Master" rushed toward the stone bull which stood upon the altar and knocked it crashing to the stone floor. The brothers crawled back toward the black hung walls in horror.

The "Master" sprang toward a great sword suspended near the altar, and with it began to scrape away at the weird symbols of the devil-worshiper's pentagram, which was painted on the floor.

"Oh, Master, spare that!" cried the leader of ceremonies.

"Oh, master, you know not what you do!" pleaded another kneeling member, with outstretched hands.

The "master" turned angrily, and with a threatening wave of the sword, cried:

"Begone! Every one of you! Get out of here!"

At the words they turned and fled through the secret entrance, leaving the "master" alone—and now more puzzled than ever. "He" looked down at the strange hands, and at the unfamiliar body.

"What can it all mean? What can it all mean?" and the unfortunate in panic tried to open the secret door. But it could not be done!

Outside, the members were buzzing in perplexed fashion as they picked their way along a creek bed toward an old mill which stood some distance up the stream. They were completely at a loss to understand the proceedings until Arthur Varney came running up to them and in a few breathless words explained the situation. At his suggestion they returned to the secret meeting place.

The outer room was empty. Suddenly a voice came from behind the curtains; they noiselessly approached the arras to peer within.

The body of the master was seated in the black carved chair talking excitedly over the telephone. The voice was tremulous with fear. "Oh, Dr. Alden, save me! It is Myra! It is Myra! But now I seem to be a man—a horrible man!"

Varney and his associates ran forward, to snatch away the instrument and quickly subdue the weak body.

"Quick, bind him—I mean her—and follow me," directed Varney, exultantly. And his command was obeyed with a cruelty which brought forth piteous moans.

CHAPTER XXXII.

The Warning of the Spirit.

"What on earth can that mean? Why was it cut off? Why can't I find out the location of that telephone? Oh, it is terrible!" and Dr. Payson Alden strode excitedly up and down the floor of his laboratory.

His companion, sitting in a reclining chair in the darkened room, interrupted mildly:

"You broke into our seance, doctor, just as I was getting into the sensitive state. Be patient, for the sake of the girl. Here—I feel the call even now."

Alden impatiently paused, and then studied the face of this medium sent by one of his friends. The man, with eyes closed and hands tensely clutching the arm of the chair, was evidently undergoing some grilling mental strain. He groaned, and breathed hard, as his body writhed in apparent physical agony.

"The spirit of a Hindoo wishes to speak to you—it is a matter of life and death," said the medium. Alden leaned forward alertly, but it was many minutes before another syllable crossed the medium's lips.

At last the sensitive spoke again.

"The Hindoo says that he is your friend. He warns you to go to the house in the gorge quick! quick! quick!"

"What else? Tell me, what more did he say?" Alden demanded anxiously.

"Nothing that I can remember. He is gone."

"Then I must be going too. 'The house in the gorge'—where can that be, I wonder. Oh, yes, I do remember a place, outside the city, where I used to collect specimens years ago. It was not far from where they used the dynamite. I will get a machine and go. Come and see me again soon. I must hurry."

With the words the doctor snatched up his revolver from his desk and slipped it into his pocket. A hasty handshake and he dashed from the room to hail a passing taxicab.

It was a tedious and nerve-racking ride to the distant gorge. Alden was tortured by a thousand grewsome fears which he realized were only too well grounded. Finally the doctor signalled the chauffeur to stop.

"Will you go with me? I need help," he asked.

"Not me, governor," responded the driver, "I stay with me car."

"Very well then. Here is your fare," and Alden paid the man. "But wait here, after you turn your machine about, for I will have another passenger with me for the trip back to town—I hope."

The man touched his cap, and the physician strode into the underbrush and down a steep declivity, his revolver in hand. After several minutes' cautious advance he approached a delapidated old frame house, standing on a ledge of rock.

The stream which flowed beside it, in a precipitous, rock-ribbed gorge resembling in a miniature way the Grand Canyon of Colorado, came from a waterfall about seventy-five feet high. Above this fall, as Alden now remembered, was a small natural dam which formed a considerable lake.

The only substantial portion of the weather-beaten structure seemed to be a strange stone chimney which was built at one end of the house, and which rose close to a higher ledge of the steep walls of the gorge.

Alden rushed for the door of the house, which swung open at his touch. Within the barren room, containing as furniture only two chairs and a wooden table, he beheld a startling scene.

In one of the chairs lay the body of Myra Maynard, bound with heavy ropes from the waist to the ankles. In another lay the unconscious figure of the high master of the Black Order! He was free from bonds entirely. The physician was mystified and ran forward to cut the ropes about the supposed Myra.

Before the girl's face hung a curious arrangement—a small hand mirror, suspended from a beam in the ceiling by a long piece of twine, and spinning as it swung. The leer on the girl's face warned him that the transportation of souls still held sway.

He pointed his weapon at the incarnation of the criminal, to be greeted by a sarcastic laugh.

"If you kill my body over there, Myra Maynard's spirit will be lost forever, Dr. Alden. If you kill her body you are guilty of murdering a young girl, and it will be impossible for her to ever come to this life again in it. You are a clever man, Dr. Payson Alden, but today the game is checkmate" jeered his enemy.

"But, if you give your word not to shoot I will permit her spirit to return to her. For I have won the game, and I prefer my own body in which to enjoy it in'" added the real high master with a cunning smile.

This was better than the present situation, although Alden knew it contained a hidden ruse.

"Go ahead! I see you are working a hypnotizing machine with the mirror. But I will shoot you if you try to escape!" answered the physician.

The enemy twirled the mirror again, gazing steadfastly into it. At the same time Alden noticed the ornate display of jewels. He saw the handbag on the table, and guessed its contents, and the purpose of the evil genius. As the hypnotism took its cataleptic hold, he quietly reached forward and tucked the handbag into his own inside coat pocket. The doctor was a physical as well as a psychical detective, in this, as in many other instances.

Suddenly the figure of the master stirred, the eyes opened and the cruel face smiled shrewdly. The girl's body was still unconscious. Alden ran toward the doorway and blocked it with the table. He covered the master now with his weapon.

"Try to escape and I'll blow your brains out!" he commanded. "You are my prisoner now!"

The master chuckled and edged toward the window, which was palpably too small for his body to pass through. Alden, sure of this, stooped over Myra, to cut the ropes, not noticing the wave of a handkerchief as a signal to some one outside.

There was a sudden, tremendous, shattering report, as a rain of rocks showered down upon the roof of the old house from the ledge of the waterfall above.

"What was that?" demanded the physician, trying vainly to awaken the girl from a mysterious stupor.

The high master chuckled, but shook his head with a pretense of ignorance.

"I suppose they are blasting somewhere. That's all I know, except that you are apt to be disappointed. * * * Listen, what is that sound?"

As he spoke, he pointed toward the window, and Alden glanced in that direction, his revolver still held ready for defense.

He saw an appalling sight. A mountain of water was rushing upon them from the waterfall! Already it was beginning to seep through the door, across the floor.

The physician realized that here, indeed, was a death trap; that the dam had been destroyed by some of the Black Order confederates, and that drowning had been the planned doom for the unfortunate girl as soon as the master could retranspose his soul!

The cunning horror of it all was plain to the physician, whose thoughts were flashing with the kaleidoscopic speed that is engendered in the last few seconds before death.

He looked about. The only door was barricaded, and was facing the direction of the impending flood. There was no escape!

"Myra, Myra! Wake up!" he cried, shaking her roughly.

The High Master stood regarding him with arms folded and a look of calm satisfaction.

"Ah, it is a pleasure to enjoy the fruits of victory—a double finish of triumph, I should call it!" he said.

Alden had caught the girl's limp body over his left arm, and now he pointed the revolver at the scoundrel who exulted so cold-bloodedly.

"Well, I am going to make a triple finish of it," he snapped out.

But before he could pull the trigger of the revolver nature's great power seemed to come to the assistance of the demoniac plotter. There was a crashing over head! The mass of water burst in through the sagging wooden walls.

Alden caught the body of the women he loved closer to his breast. At least it was sweet to be able to die with her, he thought.

There was a pandemonium of ripping, banging boards and falling planks, with showers of wet plaster. One beam struck his head, and he was dazed for an instant.

When he looked up again the Master had disappeared, as though by a continuance of his evil magic.

Alden strove to hold his footing. He sprang toward the table and forced his way past it, holding Myra closer than ever before.

The swirl of the waters caught him up and half submerged him, but he valiantly managed to hold the girl's head above the current.

He caught one glimpse of the great stone chimney, and it flashed on him how the villainous Master had disappeared. Even at that instant he was emerging from the top of it and being dragged to safety by two confederates.

On, on, the mighty current dragged them, but Alden managed to swim to the solid ground and pull the bedraggled girl to safety. The cold shock of the water had accomplished more than his own earlier efforts, for now she opened the blue eyes.

"Thank God! Oh, Myra, Myra!"

This was all he could say, as he showered the wet hands with impetuous kisses.

Myra did not restrain him. Her glance reflected the kindling glow of his own, as she strove to stand upright.

"Look," she cried. "Look, it is that man again!"

There are on the jutting ledge above them were three men. In the center was the Master. His thumbs went up, with clenched fist on either side of his cheeks, in the devil worshippers' symbol. It was the threat of continued malevolence and future dangers!

A thrill or horror shot through Alden and Myra as they stood there ankle deep in water. Alden, with a muttered imprecation, whipped out his revolver and fired. The three men promptly disappeared.

They did not come to view again, although he watched for several minutes. Then Alden and the girl began to pick their way over the rugged bank, to make a slow and laborious ascent further down the stream. It was near where Payson Alden had entered the thicket, and he breathed a sigh of gratitude to see the patient chauffeur still waiting for him.

"Great Scott, governor, wot you been doing? Out on a surf bathing party?" asked the surprised chauffeur as Alden helped Myra into the car.

"No, nothing but a little accident," he replied. "Hustle us home now. We're cold and might get warmed up if you burned up the road."

As they rode along Alden learned from Myra as much as she could remember, which was precious little. He told her of his own strange discovery of the lost trail. When he brought forth her handbag, she opened it to find her jewels and the $2,500 in cash within.

"How on earth could that have got there?" she exclaimed. "Why, these were in my safe deposit box. And this money?"

"I believe that the leader of the Black Magicians endeavored to do some high financing before he changed back to his own body. A telephone message to your bank will explain what happened. Did you know that you accepted Arthur Varney's proposal of marriage this morning?"

The girl looked at him with horror. Then she began to cry.

"Oh, Doctor Alden, I wish this terrible man had succeeded, for I would rather be dead than"—

Then she buried her face in her hands and sobbed wretchedly until the sight of her anxious mother at the front door forced her to a semblance of calm.

"We must keep most of this from poor, dear mother, for she has already had her cup of sorrow. I don't know how I can ever straighten out this angle. There was never a more miserable girl in the world than I!"

And then she and the physician spent an unpleasant half hour relating to Mrs. Maynard a logical—and untruthful—series of episodes to account for their condition.

Alden's heart was sad as he finally left them. He knew now that the grip of the Black Order was tightening. He cursed his own stupidity for not having shot the scoundrel in cold blood when he had the chance. But regrets were vain, and he engrossed himself at once on some new investigations in the laboratory.

Payson Alden was not a quitter, in danger—or love!

To Be Continued Next Sunday.

See it today at the Hippodrome, 9th and N. Y. Ave.—Advt.

IT'S EITHER DANDRUFF OR HAIR

You Can't Have Both for Long.

Look at your coat collar. If it shows evidence of dandruff you can take it as a sure sign of coming baldness unless you take steps to prevent it.

When the hair threatens to leave you can't afford to take any chances. Go to O'Donnell's Drug Store, 904 F Street, and ask for a 50c bottle of Speiser's Scalp Tonic. Use it according to directions, and in a reasonable time dandruff, falling hair and irritations of the scalp and skin will disappear and the growth of the hair will be promoted. Mr. O'Donnell is so certain of the merits of Speiser's Scalp Tonic that he'll gladly refund your money if it fails.

Avoid preparations containing alkalis (the presence of alkali is made known by the foaming of the liquid) or cocoanut oil. Be on the safe side—use Speiser's Scalp Tonic only.—Advt.

The Mysteries of Myra

An Inspiring Novel and Motion Picture Drama

Written by Hereward Carrington.

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Dramatized by Charles W. Goddard.

Synopsis of Previous Chapters.

Myra Maynard, a beautiful heiress, is the victim of a band of devil-worshippers, known as the "Black Order." Ruled by a criminal genius, called the "High Master," they are persistent in their efforts to cause her death in order to obtain the fortune which, according to a secret will made by Myra's father, a former member of their society, is theirs in case his daughter should not live until reaching legal age. Dr. Payson Alden, a physician, who has devoted years of study to the occult, becomes aware of their villainies and uses all his knowledge to protect Myra. Thus far he has succeeded in thwarting their many plans, despite the connivance of Arthur Varney, a wealthy clubman, who is secretly a member of the "Black Order."

The High Master of the society finally manages to substitute his own soul for that of the girl. He returns, in the spirit, to Myra's body and endeavors to kill the friendly physician. Myra's soul is imprisoned in the body of the crafty leader of the "Black Order," to be made helpless by his directions. Dr. Alden, the only one to realize the truth, fights the High Master with his own weapons and manages to force the evil leader to make the substitution so that the girl can return to her own body.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Mistaken Intervention.

NEXT morning the determined physician was the earliest visitor at Myra's home.

"We have come closer and closer to the mystery," he declared, "and now I am prepared to end this whole horrible affair as it should be ended."

Myra nodded, but her mother interrupted.

"Dr. Alden, at first I was indignant at your intercession, then skeptical, but now I realize that you have been right," she said. "Yet every time you have tried to fight these unknown people you have involved Myra in greater danger. Wouldn't it be wiser to call a truce with them?"

"My dear lady, a truce with snakes means nothing but death in the end!" he exclaimed.

"This wicked man is determined on one thing alone—the destruction of your daughter!"

Myra shuddered instinctively and Alden noticed it with apprehension. It was this bare suggestion of the terror which was underlying the girl's spiritual bravery which prompted him to make the first serious error of his campaign.

Myra's mother persisted.

"It is just this way, Dr. Alden. Whatever, whoever these forces may be, it seems to me that they must be thoroughly frightened and alarmed for their own existence after the battle you have made against them. Would it not be possible to come to some sort of agreement with them?"

"But why?" persisted Alden.

The mother looked at him earnestly and pointed toward the wan face of the girl.

"Can't you see that every day of this terrible strain is eating away Myra's strength and life, Dr. Alden?" she demanded, with a gesture of despair.

"Mother, I am not at all afraid, and I agree with Mr. Alden in every particular," said Myra.

"Well, perhaps, with woman's intuition you are right," he said, reluctantly.

"Of course I am right," declared the older woman, with confidence. "These people are only flesh and blood after all. The first law of nature is self-preservation."

Alden nodded.

"Well, it is my duty to run these scoundrels to earth. Yet if they will spare Miss Myra I might agree. Still I do not know how to reach them."

Mrs. Maynard cast a triumphant glance at him, while Myra hesitated. Her mother walked to the library table.

"Here," she announced proudly, "is the name and address of the most wonderful clairvoyant in the world. I went to ask the advice of a very dear friend of mine. And she told me about Mr. Bert Reese, whom we can visit right this very morning. My friend says that he can get in touch with the living or the dead simply by mental power. I can hardly believe her—and yet for my little Myra I would believe almost anything and try even more. This terrible affair has already taught me that the most believeable things were what I used to regard as absolutely preposterous. I hardly know whom to trust."

Alden had taken from her hand the slip of paper which she had drawn from the table drawer.

"I have heard of Mr. Bert Reese, but never met him. He is said to be a wonderful psychic. It is a good idea to see him, at any rate," he admitted.

"Well, I'll do whatever you advise, doctor," said Myra, "but I hate to see your life work all go for naught."

Alden sprang to his feet nervously.

"We might as well hurry over to see him, then," he suggested.

Willis, the butler, obediently brought the wraps, unfortunately overhearing the conversation. In a few minutes they were speeding in the family automobile toward the home the psychic specialist. And even as they were ascending the steps of Reese's home Arthur Varney was repeating that operation before Myra's residence.

As Willis answered the door he appeared distraught, keen with some mixture of eagerness and fear.

"Is Miss Myra at home?" asked the clubman, entering with his customary assurance.

"No, sir. She and her mother have gone out, sir."

"Where did they go?"

"Out with Dr. Alden," was the grudging reply.

Varney looked startled, but quietly persisted in his interrogation.

"Where did they go?"

Willis hesitated, but Varney smiled condescendingly.

"You know, as Miss Myra's fiance, I have the right to inquire, Willis. She would be very angry with you if you did not tell her where I could find her."

Willis stammered and then became the obedient servant once more as he answered, formally:

"I'm not sure, sir, but I understood them to say that they were going to see a clairvoyant or some such person. A Mr. Reese, I think it was, sir, but I could not tell you the address, sir, as they did not instruct me."

"A clairvoyant? Bert Reese? Huh!"

Then catching the sharp and questioning look which shone in the servant's eyes he covered himself.

"What a ridiculous thing! Well, I don't know where that may be, and I suppose I had better wait here. They will be back soon, I am sure, as Myra had an appointment with me."

He tossed his hat and stick to the butler and ensconced himself in a comfortable library chair.

"That is all, Willis," he announced with an irritating attitude of proprietorship. "You may go now."

Willis bowed and left him alone, apparently reading a magazine. But no sooner was Varney alone than he sprang to the telephone. A quick, low-toned call for a certain number—and with eager watchfulness against possible eavesdropping he began to talk as soon as a familiar voice greeted him.

"Yes, yes, master."

There was a silence, in which the confident attitude was replaced by a certain timidity.

"Yes, master, I will do as you instructed me. But I wish to warn you against a new tack. Alden has taken them to Bert Reese, the clairvoyant. Be on your guard, for this man is determined—even as much as you and I are."

There was an apparently curt command, for Varney's face registered a new shade of fear as he added: "Yes, master, your commands are life and death—it shall be done!"

As he hung up the receiver he ran noiselessly to the library doors to examine the tapestries and all other possible hiding places of a possible auditor. But on realizing that his message had been safe he lighted a cigarette and resumed an abstracted perusal of the magazine to bide his time.

He had waited for fully ten minutes with no news from Myra when the butler entered.

"Is there anything I can do for you, sir?"

Varney regarded the man with skepticism. Willis seemed too bright-eyed in his solicitude. It were well to dispense with this watch-dog's attention for a brief period he told himself. He drew a banknote from his pocket

"You are very thoughtful, Willis. You can favor me greatly if you will. I want some cigars and you can obtain them at the tobacco shop down the street. Here is a bill—just keep the change—I want three Havana Marlos, Willis. And hurry right back with them."

The butler nodded and left the room with a perceptible glance of suspicion at the visitor. Varney did not mistake it.

"I'll be inclined to attend to you, my faithful flunky," he muttered, with a threatening smile, as he watched the butler disappear down the driveway. "However, I think your developing cleverness will be too late."

Sure that his way was clear, with the other servants busy in the kitchen, Varney slipped noiselessly up the broad stairway to the floor on which were the family bedrooms. He hurried into Myra's boudoir and cautiously opened the door. He entered, looked about and examined the room carefully.

"Ah!" he smiled, "I was afraid there were no electric lights up here because the house is old-fashioned. But there are both electric and gas. This is good!"

He examined the lighting fixtures, ascertaining that both the current and the illuminating vapor were in working condition. Then he went to the closet. Opening the doorway of this he searched within and found an electric light arranged so that the garments, so neatly hung within, were of easy access.

"Very convenient," exclaimed the plotter. "Well, here goes for the red rays. The Master said that ultra-violet rays of light would interfere with the astral projection, but that red would be the easiest. I will leave the light lit for future reference."

He unscrewed the ordinary incandescent bulb from the wardrobe socket. From an inside pocket of his coat he drew forth a peculiarly shaped red globe which he substituted for the other. Then, turning on the current, he closed the door and left the room with the same feline caution with which he had entered.

As he peered out of the window of the hall he beheld the figure of Willis hurrying up the driveway. Varney managed to reach the library just in time to assume a nonchalant attitude of absorption in the magazine when the butler quietly let himself in the front doorway.

"Well, Willis, you made a very quick trip. I thought the cigar shop was about two blocks away?"

"Yes, sir," answered Willis, with a cough of deprecation.

"Well, did you get the cigars?"

"No, sir. The man had none left, sir. I'm so sorry, sir."

"Did you get any others, Willis? You know I would have taken a substitute."

"Oh, sir. I thought you would be too particular to do that, sir," he replied. "Shall I send the gardener for some others, sir?"

"No, let it go, Willis. I will go down and get them myself, now," and he walked toward the hallway to look for his coat and hat.

As he turned back on the driveway to look at the mansion he chuckled.

"That old hypocrite never went there. He thought he fooled me. Well, he is guessing, but it will do no good. The Master told me that she would be mine forever and forever in all the ages if we win out. Well, we will win out with the arts and mysteries of the centuries to help us. I wonder what they doing at that clairvoyant's place?"

He walked on, satisfied.

THE MASTER RECITED HIS PLAN

ALDEN WAS SORELY PUZZLED

CHAPTER XXXIV.

The Mental Messenger.

DOCTOR Alden and Myra had followed her mother into the study of the famous clairvoyant.

Alden, after the preliminary introduction, made an explanation of the case which interested the psychic profoundly. The doctor reserved many of the details, but this story was complete enough to win the vital interest of the other man.

"Well, I'll start right away," declared Reese. "Write your message on a piece of paper and I think I can convey it to the leader of this Black Order, no matter where he is."

Alden sat down at a table while the others waited. He used a memorandum pad and with his fountain pen had rapidly lined this simple offer of peace.

"If you will stop your attacks on Miss Myra and others I will agree to leave you in peace.
"PAYSON ALDEN."

"Now, while I relax in this big chair, just fold it up and hold it against my forehead. You do not need to show it to me now," instructed the clairvoyant, who had already drawn down the shades, leaving the room in a soothing darkness.

Alden obeyed. The clairvoyant closed his eyes and the trio about him were very silent.

Minutes passed, without avail. His face became drawn with the inward struggle which he seemed to be making. He breathed in gasps and even in the dim light of the room Myra saw that he was tensely clutching the leather arm of the big chair with clawing fingers.

"I can't reach him," he muttered, in a half moan. "I can't project it—there is some obstruction."

The minutes seemed to drag into hours, yet there was still failure.

Far away, with thumbs upturned against a sin-seamed jowl, sat the mysterious leader of the devil-worshipers in his characteristic attitude.

Strangely enough he was ensconced in a leaden-walled chamber the door of which was barred. The only ventilation came from a small slit window in the side of the compartment. On the sill of this lay a small, shiny crystal, different from that of Myra's in that it was some transparent material entirely black!

The Master gazed fixedly into this sphere and suddenly chuckled with satisfaction. Within the crystal a tiny fleck of white appeared and a note seemed to be unfolding.

"The message!" muttered the black magician. "I am receiving it now, protected against all outside influences."

He read it, repeating the words in an undertone. It was the message from Alden.

He hesitated and gritted his teeth in silent fury as he paused for thought. Then he snarled in that serpent-like hissing voice which was so expressive of the cunning of the mystery workers:

"There can be no truce between the black powers and the white!" was the message which Bert Reese suddenly received and registered on a white pad of paper with his trembling pencil.

"It is from the Black Order!" cried Alden, catching up the paper as Reese opened his eyes.

He read the ominous words and turned to the others with a grave tone in his voice as he added:

"Well, there is the reply. It is to be a battle to the finish from now on. I can see that. Well, so be it. It is better thus. Evil is never conquered by retreat nor scampering away in fright. White magic must win!"

Mrs. Maynard began to weep.

"Oh, doctor, I am so discouraged. I had hoped that my suggestion would bring us all peace at such a time. Why should they be so implacable?"

"Take this message," declared the doctor.

He scribbled another note, but the message could not be sent through the ethereal channels again, although the clairvoyant strove for half an hour. It was the query: "What is your price?"

And the reason for the silence in reply was that the Black Master had immolated himself within the protecting walls of the leaden chamber by closing the slit and withdrawing the dark crystal. He had stretched out in a recumbent position in an easy chair before his small duplicate of Alden's hypnotizing machine. Where that crooked, evil soul was journeying now, with the malevolent eyes closed, hands clenched tightly and hawk-like lips drawn over the fang-like teeth, only that individual spirit could tell.

Myra, her mother and Dr. Alden returned dejectedly to the house, where the physician bade them good-by.

"I'm going home to make some important experiments," he said as he parted. "I believe in preparedness. I'm assembling a little battery of soul artillery which will give the gentleman with the ubiquitous thumbs a new thrill."

"What do you mean?" asked Myra.

"I'll tell you that in due time," he said. "But now we've no time to lose."

They were standing in the corridor, near the big doorway. Mrs. Maynard had hurried upstairs to her room, a victim of renewed nerves, so that the couple supposed themselves to be alone.

But, unknown to them, Arthur Varney had returned to complete his call. He was standing now, ears alert, behind the portieres of the music room. He strained every nerve to catch the doctor's words.

Alden was holding Myra's little hand in his longer than he realized. He looked up suddenly and saw the sweet confusion of her warm glance.

"Miss Myra—Myra, it is always hard to say good-by to you because——"

"Why?" she queried softly.

"Because I love you!" he blurted out in a subdued but vibrant voice which carried the confession to the tingling ears of the eavesdropper. Varney's eyes flashed with jealous fury.

The girl gently withdrew her hand from the ardent clasp of the physician and removed her glove. She held out the white fingers of the left hand and exposed the sparkling solitaire.

"Although it was all a mistake, which I cannot understand now, doctor, it is wrong for us to talk so while I am wearing Arthur Varney's ring."

"You are right, Miss Myra," answered the physician. "Good-by, we will talk of it later."

"'Not if I know it!" muttered the secreted listener as he turned away with murderous determination on his dark face.

The doctor turned and after a deep look into Myra's smiling eyes, lit with a new hope now, he departed, his mind busied strangely enough with mingled plans for love and a fight to the death.

Myra paused on the doorsill, then turned into the music room.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, startled at the sight of Varney. "I didn't know you were here, Arthur."

"I've been sitting in this corner all the while, my dear Myra," answered the other from the far end of the room to which he had discreetly retreated. He pretended to have heard nothing, and Myra was relieved.

Varney sat down to the piano, began to play with a splendid touch. Myra turned in dismay as he began to sing, in a far from unpleasant baritone voice, the old song:

"Myra, my own love—Myra, my true love—
"Say you will be mine through the long years to come!"

Myra nervously ran to the piano, drawing his hand from the ivory keyboard with her own fingers.

"Arthur," she gasped. "I cannot marry you, Arthur. I am so sorry, dear friend, but I was not myself when we became engaged."

"You don't know what you are saying," he began.

"Yes, I do, Arthur. Now I know only too well. But before I did not realize. I cannot marry you, Arthur, and you must accept your ring back again."

He protested at first with a deep show of injured pride, then with that ingratiating eloquence and flattering consideration which had made the earlier impression upon the young girl he begged her to reconsider.

Gently she shook her head, and then to ease the pain which he declared was rending his soul she solaced him with: "Well, Arthur, I will think it over until Monday, if you insist."

Her manner was firm, and Varney grudgingly ended his entreaties. He abruptly made his departure and stormily walked down the driveway, flecking with his cane at the pebbles.

"I must get the Master to let me project my own astral this time," he muttered. "Then I'll play a hand that is worth while."

He took a taxicab at the nearest stand and made devious detours through the semi-suburban streets. Twice he changed vehicles, looking behind to observe if he were followed.

Apparently satisfied after more sinuous doubling upon his trail he disappeared through the doorway of an old building in a tumbledown section of the city. A few minutes later he was addressing the secret leader of the "Black Order" within the thought-proof shelter of the leaden chamber.

"Master, will you allow me to materialize my astral under the red light? Please do this, for I want revenge. My love has turned to hate!"

The Master scrutinized him with a look fairly biting in its piercing intensity.

"I had not planned it, Varney," he said, with a smile, "but perhaps it is a good variation. Yet I fear to trust this important work to anyone other than myself."

He beckoned toward the chair and drew the hypnotising machine toward his subject. Varney fixed his eyes upon the revolving mirrors as they showered the glittering rays. Gradually he became tense and silent. Then the Master muttered a strange incantation. The body sank back stiffly into the chair and the black pontiff laughed exultantly.

"Kill her!" he commanded. Kill her! Kill her! Kill her!"

He sat down then to await developments from the unseen. A wraith-like figure seemed to shadow itself for an instant in the corner of the room. It bore a bare resemblance to a human figure as it passed through the half-opened slit window of the lead chamber.

Back in Myra Maynard's bedroom the girl had stretched out to relax her throbbing nerves. Her head ached and her eyes burned with unbidden tears.

"Oh, it seems so wicked, so wrong that poor mother and I should suffer this way, for no fault of our own. And poor Payson."

The girl had closed the window, for a bitter spring wind was blowing. She lay on the bed, unconscious of a gray shadow which had entered through the solid walls of the room. This wraith passed quickly into the closet, through the closed doorway. Myra dropped off into a troubled dream.

No soul within the residence had sensed the danger lurking within for the girl except one faithful servitor: Myra's pet collie, which stirred uneasily in its sleep in the lower hall.

The dog had sniffed, its hair rising stiffly along the scruff of its neck and it had backed into a corner with a low growl. Then it had curled up again, looking about the dim corridor with watchful eyes.

CHAPTER XXXV.

The Materialization.

WITHIN the wardrobe a strange thing was taking place. The gray spirit, which seemed of no more substance than the shadow of smoke, was becoming more solidified. Now, lumps seemed twisting and forming in a queer kaleidoscopic manner, whirling about madly.

Gradually it assumed a definite shape—legs and arms appeared, likewise a crooked, gnarled neck, until finally a crude head with twisted features. It seemed barely human, this brutish figure crowding the silken gowns of the narrow wardrobe. Yet gradually it was pulled, by some unseen creative power, from a shape resembling a rough-hewn clay figure into the figure of a man.

The door of the wardrobe opened and the figure, walking clumsily, passed out through the portal into the girls' bedroom. There was merely the vestige of resemblance between this mottled, hideous monster and the swarthy, handsome Arthur Varney. Yet as it passed the mirror its smudgy eyes turned toward the fearsome reflection. The figure started back in terror; the block-like fingers went up in a gesture of dismay.

The materialized astral walked toward the bed, leaning over the sleeping girl. The figure walked toward the dressing table and lifted up Myra's shears. It return to the bedside and raising them up, dagger-like, was about to plunge them into the bosom.

Again the strange love of Varney for his hounded victim prevented, even in the spell of the Master's hypnotism. It paused, this evil incarnation of all that was evil in the man's spirit, drawing back as though in fear.

Then, dropping the scissors on the counterpane by the girl's head, the spectre walked toward the electric-gas fixture in the center of the room. It reached upward, turned on the jet valve and the gas began to escape.

The astral walked into the wardrobe again to close the door as secretly as it had been opened. Myra lay sleeping now, unconscious of the doom which was seeping through the opened jet.

In the glow of the red light, crushing her garments against the wall, the weird figure began to disintegrate as mysteriously as it had been carnated. Soon there was no trace of it except the faint shadow of grayness which now once more, in the ethereal state, passed easily through the panels of the shut door, into the room, where it gazed for an instant at the girl, then through the wall and down the stairs.

Once more it passed the collie. This time the animal sprang to its feet, backing away into the corner and barking in fright and rage. The astral passed through the walls and crossed the intervening space in its own odd manner until once more the eyelids of Arthur Varney's body fluttered with returning consciousness.

"Well!" cried the Master, eagerly.

"I turned on the gas," replied Varney. "Oh, how my arms hurt—and my feet—and my head! Help me, do something for me! I feel horrible!"

The Master soothed him with hypnotic gestures, his face relaxing into a smile of triumph long delayed.

The collie, down in the hall, had sniffed the air and then answering some subtle call of that brute instinct of which we know so little, trotted up the stairway. Still sniffing, it ran to Myra's room. There is scratched at the doorway.

There was no answer. Again it scratched and now began to bark. Its frantic howls, increasing in their desperate message, brought Willis and Mrs. Maynard from their rooms.

"What is the matter with the dog?" cried Myra's mother.

"I think he's crazy, madam," began Willis.

"What's that queer smell?" cried the mother.

"It's gas!" cried Willis, and Mrs. Maynard pushed upon the door, to be met by a sickening sweep of the choking vapor.

With a cough and an exclamation of alarm, Willis ran to the bed to lift the girl and carry her unconscious form from the room. Myra's mother opened the window and gasped for air. She reached up to turn off the stop-cock.

"She has tried to kill herself again!" the miserable mother murmured.

As Myra regained consciousness her mother plied her with questions. She could not understand. She entered the room weakly and saw the scissors on the bed.

"Mother, I did not put those there. And I certainly did not turn on the gas."

Mrs. Maynard was astounded, while Willis blinked in polite perplexity.

"Mother! mother! It is more of the work of the Black Order—we must send for Dr. Alden at once. Don't let a thing in this room be touched!"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A Trap for the Master.

DR. ALDEN lost not a minute in racing for Mona's home. The girl told him little over the telephone, but he guessed much.

When he was led to her bed room, he walked about with half-closed eyes and tightly compressed looks. He studied the position of the shears, and examined the little handle of the gas jet with a reading glass. There were apparently no tell-tale finger prints. Mrs. Mason and Mona waited silently as he continued his investigation of the door jamb, the threshold and even the window sills.

At last he opened the door of her wardrobe closet. There was the red glow of the incandescent bulb.

"Why, it's on fire!" exclaimed Mona, stepping forward excitedly.

"No, it's not," asserted the physician, whose hand had shot toward the electric light bulb. "It is worse than fire!"

He unscrewed the light from its socket and carried it to the window.

"Did you have a red lamp in your closet, Miss Mona?" he queried sharply.

"No it was white. I never saw that before."

"Um—ah!" and the doctor examined the object carefully. "This was made in France. I have only seen one like it before. It gives more crimson rays than any other light. I wonder how it came there?"

"I certainly don't know," and Mona regarded him with helpless bewilderment. "It was a white light this morning when I took out the gown I wore."

Alden studied the tiny filaments of the bulb.

"You know, Miss Mason, the peculiar thing about this lamp is that red light rays are conducive to psychic work. Here is a little stimulant for black magic. There was no way to enter your home at this time of day, except through the unseen. Here has been some materialization of which we know nothing. But I have the antidote for the red rays!"

"What is that, doctor?"

"Ultra-violet! And with your permission I will set up a little trap for these worthies which will be as scientific as their own methods," declared the physician, with the first suggestion of amusement in his eyes.

"How do you mean, doctor?" and Mrs. Mason shook her head in discouragement. "Things have been steadily going from bad to worse—each day of this miserable business brings additional danger to Mona, not to mention myself."

Mother instinct was thoroughly aroused; but Alden had conquered these objections before. He was too near success now to give in weakly.

"Just see how this turns out, Mrs. Mason!" he pleaded. "You saw how near they came to their purpose today. I wish they would try the little gas arrangement again. This time we will be prepared for them."

"You don't mean you want my daughter to run this risk of asphyxiation again?"

"Exactly!"

He had started toward the lower floor.

"With Miss Mona's permission I will telephone to my assistants to bring my apparatus over here at once. Can I have it?"

The girl smiled bravely, and nodded, despite her mother's remonstrance.

"Mona, I forbid!"

"Mother, dear, run right into the music room and have some tea served for the doctor and me and your dear, sweet, obstinate self!" was the imperious counter-objection.

Mrs. Mason walked away apprehensively.

"No good will come of all these curious machines!" she muttered to Willis, who tacitly agreed with her.

"Now," said Dr. Payson Alden, "I want you to tell a white fib if Arthur Varney calls up. I have left orders for my machines to come—so, it is better to let him think that you have gone out some place, or better still, that you and your mother are both ill, and will retire early. We do not want any outside advice on this matter.

"You do not trust Arthur, do you, Doctor?"

"I trust only you and myself, Mona," was the answer. "Let us not bring any one else into the matter. There has been treachery somewhere about your home already; I am unable to say exactly where. If Varney makes any inquiries just keep him wondering tonight.

As he spoke the telephone tinkled and Mona ran to the instrument.

"Yes, Arthur. It is I—Oh, I feel dreadfully tired, but not really ill. What is that? Oh, it is impossible. Mother is not herself at all tonight and she has already retired. No, I really couldn't see you at all until tomorrow. I'm going to be myself within an hour. Yes, good-by."

Alden smiled as she finished.

"There, now, I feel that we can work out our plans without sarcastic comments."

There was a crunching on the gravel within the half hour as a motor drew up before the door. Alden hurried to the door, expectantly.

"What can that be?" asked Mrs. Mason.

"My lamps. Right this way, Jones," directed the physician. Two workmen carried out some curious-looking brass tubes, set in heavy metal frames from which dangled coiled cables which resembles black garden hose.

Under his guidance they carried them up the stairs to Mona's room. There the two assistants, expert electricians busied themselves with the connections of the tubular lamps, attaching them to the electric lights at the side of the bedroom.

Mrs. Maynard watched these preparations with growing disapproval.

"I am half a mind to telephone to Arthur Varney and ask his advice about this, Mona," she declared.

"You will do nothing of the sort," was the girl's determined answer. "Dr. Alden is working on something to end all this business tonight."

"That's it exactly," and the physician was now engaged in making a delicate connection between the gas jet and some delicate connection between the gas-jet and some delicate wire. "Now, I'll show you ladies a pretty little sight. Are you ready, men?"

"Yep, boss. Turn on the juice. We've got it fixed just like it was in your joint."

The twilight had darkened outside and suddenly, to Mrs. Mason's alarm, a crackling, shooting radiation of violet flames seemed to spring up about them from the tubes, which had been ranged around the room in rectangular position.

"There! These are ultra-violet rays and they will destroy all occult forces. No psychic action can go on in these defensive lights, and when some one endeavors to turn on the gas he will turn on the electricity instead. Now let the Master do his worst!"

Alden carefully removed all pins, scissors, and sharp instruments from the room.

With a few more adjustments the doctor was satisfied. He repaced the red incandescent in the wardrobe, gave Myra a detailed explanation of the wiring and left the room.

"Do you mind if I perch downstairs in the library for a few hours tonight, Mrs. Maynard?" he asked. "I have been working pretty hard on my psychic trap and I would like to be handy when it is worked."

The mother agreed, grudgingly; this "nonsense" was getting more and more on her nerves. It was a dreary wait for her until early bedtime, for she was possessed with a hundred new fears of the Great Unseen. But the physician's confidence, Myra's growing cheerfulness, both served to reconcile her.

At last the girl bade the doctor a soft-eyed good night and followed her mother up the stairs. Alden, with a cigarette and half a dozen of the father's old musty volumes of Med'eval lore, was left to his own thoughts in the darkened library. He had, with foresight, drawn down the window shades so that his presence could not be observed from the outside.

An hour, two hours passed, without undue occurrence. Suddenly he heard a scream and rushed upstairs. Myra's door was locked. He heard her sobbing within.

"Let me in. I will help you!" he cried.

"Oh, it is too late now to do anything," he heard her faint voice. His heart leaped into his throat

He banged at the door and Mrs. Maynard came running into the hall

"What is it?" she cried. But the door was opening now and Myra's delicate figure, clad in her dressing-gown, slipped through the door to cower behind the stalwart young physician.

"Where is he? What was it?" cried Alden. "Ah, the violet rays were lit!"

"Yes. He came from the closet. I pretended to be asleep. He was horrible looking. But I recognized him."

Myra was burying her face in her trembling fingers.

"What happened then?" Alden advanced into the room with drawn revolver. It was entirely empty.

"He leaned over me. He looked around the room for some weapon, I believe. He tried to lift a chair to hit me but it was apparently too heavy. I could see it all by the moonlight through the window, and then he went to the gas-jet. Then I heard his voice."

"What did he say?"

"'Nothing is right unless I do it myself.' He turned on the gas jet and the violet lights sprang up all about the room."

"Yes, yes!"

"He seemed to scream silently. His arms twisted, his legs jumped up and down like a child's toy. He ran for the closet, but the tubs of light on the floor was seeming to block the way. Then I saw his body, gradually melting away in this awful agony, actually fade and disappear before my eyes as it sank to the floor."

Alden's voice rang triumphantly.

"We got him that time!"

"But," interrupted poor bewildered Mrs. Maynard, "who was it, my child?"

The girl looked at her mother, made the thumbs-up sign of the devil-worshipers and, with her blue eyes staring wide, answered:

"That horrible beast the master!"

"That's the last of him," declared the doctor, as he held out his hand to the girl. "No materialized astral can live in the violet roys."

"I'm not so sure," she said, with vague intuition. "Not so sure."

(To Be Continued Next Sunday.)

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The Mysteries of Myra An Inspiring Novel and Motion Picture Drama

Written by Hereward Carrington.

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Dramatized by Charles W. Goddard.

Synopsis of Previous Chapters.

Myra Maynard, a beautiful heiress, is pursued by a band of black magicians. Their goal is her death so that the fortune of Myra's father, a former member of the Black Order, may come to them before her arriving at legal age, according to his secret will.

Dr. Payson Alden, a brilliant young physician, who has devoted years to the study of the psychic, learns of their operations. Many times Myra's life is saved by the daring doctor. His efforts are made especially difficult by the secret connivance with the Black Order of Arthur Varney, a wealthy clubman, who is desperately in love with Myra, but held by fear to the commands of the high master. By hypnotism the girl is commanded to kill herself in the secret lodgeroom which her father has built in their house; she walks in her sleep to obey this, but is rescued by Alden. Under the instruction of the physician, Myra learns to project her astral or spiritual body, and during one of these psychic experiments the members of the order toil in their evil mysteries to bring her death by severing the astral chord so that the soul cannot return. The prayers of Myra's mother and the doctor win where science fails. [illegible] oriental flower is sent to the girl by Varney, but Alden's intervention saves her from death.

While endeavoring to track down the criminals Alden is thwarted by dynamite, and returns to his home to find that at the suggestion of Varney Myra has used the doctor's hypnotizing machine to send out her astral in search of him. The arch criminal substitutes his own soul for that of the girl, and in Myra's body endeavors to slay her benefactor. With souls twisted curious things happen, but Alden shrewdly forces the substitution and escapes with the girl from a new form of destruction.

Finally the devil worshipers make a supreme effort, sending the astral of Arthur Varney to the girl's room at night, where the body is materialized according to the methods of black magic. Varney turns on the gas, but good fortune saves her once more. Dr. Alden then sets a trap in her bedroom for a revisitation, placing ultra-violet ray electric lamps about the room.

A second attempt is made by this same method, no less a person than the high master materializing. The strange electric lights, cunningly turned on as he strives to slay the girl, decompose the astral materialization, and Alden feels confident that he has slain the arch enemy at last.

THE ATTEMPT FAILED—

HE SIGHTED THE WEAPON CAREFULLY—

CHAPTER XXXVII.

The Death Sentence.

THE Master of the Black Order lay back, breathing heavily, his limbs twisting in an occasional paroxysm of pain. The black velvet curtains, close by the easy chair in which he reclined, seemed surcharged with the writhing of some restless spirit. Arthur Varney leaned forward studying the face of the leader with anxiety.

"Do you feel completely recovered, master?" he asked. "I thought you were dead last night. We worked over you for two hours or more."

The other's voice was husky, as he responded.

"Yes! My astral went through the most terrible sufferings. The chord was nearly destroyed by the ultra-violet. How could that scoundrel have learned about its power? And how could the trap have been set for me so? Who gave the warning that I was going there myself?"

Varney shook his head. The master fixed his basilisk eyes upon the dark ones of the clubman.

"Varney, I have more than once felt that there was a traitor in the camp. You know what happened to that Hindoo? Well, that was only the bare suggestion of what I know how to do in the line of punishment. Beware of treachery, Varney!"

The other man's voice shook as he extended a pleading hand.

"Oh, master! I have been faithful unto death. I have sacrificed my every impulse to obey your mandates."

"Yes," snarled the other, twisting as though in renewed agony. "And you know the reason why you have been afraid to break your oaths of fealty."

"You will not betray me?"

"No, as long as you remain faithful. But I know well that your love for Myra Maynard has made you hesitate several times when success was within our grasp. Remember, the reward I have promised you will only be paid if you earn it."

The master was silent for a few moments, lost in thought. At last he spoke.

"I am still suffering from the astral pain, due to the drag of the soul, from those accursed lights. But, now I know the instrument of our complete vengeance," and the master reached to the left, crashing a brazen summons on the Oriental gong which swung close at hand.

The master of ceremonies of the Black Order entered with a slow salaam.

"Has the trial begun?" demanded the master.

"Yes, even as the master has commanded."

"Let me have the listening tube," demanded the ruler of evil. A gutta percha tube was handed to his stiffened grasp, and he listened with a cruel smile on his face.

At the other extremity of the connection a tragic scene, similar in some ways to other gatherings of that mysterious group of evildoers—was being enacted. Yet there was a deadly tenseness in the robed figures with hooded heads which evidenced the change which had come over the self-confident members of the Black Order.

Within the past few days they had realized that their leader was not infallible. The grip of law and order had been closing in about them, driving them from the ancient meeting place to these new quarters. The hitherto indissuable master was, they knew, even now suffering from his psychic adventure, after two abrupt failures.

So it was that the spirit of suspicion burned in the breast of every member against every fellow. The shrewd leader had wisely planted with each one the germ of doubt, that he might play upon this destructive emotion for his own subtle purposes.

In the center of the black garbed group stood a man, unhooded. He looked about him fearfully, his rugged features now flabby with unconcealed panic; his gnarled fingers intertwining with nervous agitation.

"But, it was only a mistake," he pleaded hoarsely. "I swear that I obeyed the master, as well as I could.

A chorus of subdued, scornful laughs greeted this vain attempt at mollification. The gong crashed three times within, and now came the sibilant voice of the master, through the somber tapestry walls.

"What say ye, brothers of the Black? Shall this man die according to our laws?"

The master of ceremonies had re-entered, and the judges faced him, peering through the eyeholes of the grewsome hoods.

"All those who have decided upon the punishment for the traitor will indicate their wish in the ancient form," declared this individual.

He turned toward the man at his left with a questioning gesture.

"You, Brother Kappa?"

The masked man held out his hand, turning the thumb downward with a vicious jab in the air.

The culprit groaned and looked eagerly at the second, on the other's left.

Again, again, again!

The death verdict was registered by thirteen uncompromising thumbs. The trembling sufferer covered his eyes with his hands and screamed in an absolute breakdown of spirit:

"Mercy!"

Upon his knees, in the center of the cabalistic pentagram painted upon the floor of the room, he fell, his arms outstretched in mute appeal. The leader drew from a recess behind the altar a dagger and a small black lacquered box.

"It is decided. Death is the punishment. CHOOSE!"

He extended the two objects to the abject victim. The man stretched forward his hand for the knife, and then his flaccid fingers relaxed. He dropped it to the floor. He reached for the receptacle and opened it, as his judges chuckled knowingly. Within the box was a single white tablet.

"What is this?" he asked.

"Poison—quick and certain; which way of death will you follow?" asked the master of ceremonies sternly.

"Neither!" and the response was barely louder than a whisper.

The thirteen black figures about him arose from their crouching position. Now they stood with folded arms. The culprit stared about as though seeking some way to dart through the fatal circle. Yet he knew it was a hopeless thought.

"Choose!"

They spoke in unison, a grim chorus of sepulchral voices. As the white hands all pointed at him he finally weakened. He placed the tablet within his mouth and gulped it down. The figures drew closer now. Their heads were nearer as they watched with morbid curiosity the effect of the deadly drug. Suddenly the gong sounded once more from within and the voice of the evil pontiff reached them.

"Send in the doomed one. I would speak with him before he dies," were his words.

The prisoner was led through the curtains; he stumbled as he walked like a man in a trance. Within the sanctum, Varney now concealed in the corner of the room, the Master awaited with a venomous smile.

"You have learned the lesson for traitors. Even a mistake means death under my rule!"

The victim gulped again and strove to speak. But no words issued from the white lips. The Master placed a black box upon the altar near him, and, opening it, disclosed a number of small vials and boxes. He drew one of the glass containers from the case, after a careful study, uncorked it, and smelled it. Then he closed the box once more and put it away from sight. Varney observed him with fearful curiosity, but no one spoke until the great criminal opened his lips.

"Here is an antidote which will save you from the poison you have just taken!"

The culprit gasped and found his tongue at last.

"Oh, Master, give it me!" he begged. "Oh, pardon me, I have only erred, not sinned against our order. I will make restitution for the rest of my life; let me be your slave even more than I am now. But save me, Master, save me!"

He tried to snatch the vial, but the master of ceremonies forced him to his knees, as the leader drew back the saving drug with a cunning laugh.

"The poison is very slow. You need not take the antidote for two days," he observed. "A great deal may happen in two days. I will perhaps give you a chance for your life."

The culprit begged again for the drug, but the Master was adamant.

"You must earn it. I have work for you to do, And you have only two days in which to do it," he turned toward Varney and the ceremonial leader. "Leave us. I must instruct this man."

When the two were alone the Master engaged in an earnest conversation which lasted for many minutes. As he finished he relaxed once more in the easy chair, rubbing his aching limbs.

"I have now the chance to repay these spiritual hurts. It is worth it all in the end," he muttered as he closed his eyes in evil reverie.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Thought Photography.

IN his psychological laboratory Dr. Payson Alden was giving a little talk upon the curious science of thought photography. His auditors were Mrs. Maynard, Myra and the ubiquitous Arthur Varney. The latter, despite his cynicism about Alden's studies, displayed what seemed an unusually keen interest in the psychic. Many times Payson Alden had endeavored to eliminate him from their conferences, but Myra's mother, with feminine obstinacy, had insisted on his presence. And the physician good-naturedly weakened before her determination.

"Thought photography," the physician concluded, "is the supreme development of science, in proving the concrete nature of mental activity. Those pictures I have shown you were authentic prints from photographic plates made by investigators. The images recorded on the plates were Nature's reproduction of the thoughts in the mind of the experimenter. In some instances it was a number—clearly shown in the photograph; in other cases it was a simple object, such as a triangle, a square box or a bird. It has been necessary to pick out something which could be easily photographed. But I predict that we are just at the beginning of this new science."

"It is ridiculous," commented Mrs. Maynard. "I think that some one touched up the plates. To say that an unspoken thought can be impressed upon a piece of glass just because it is held over another person's forehead is ridiculous."

"You are right, Mrs. Maynard," chimed in Varney. "I know very little about science. I regard it all as a stupid bore—but I do know that the sun's light is necessary to make a photographic plate record anything. That's simple."

"How about x-rays?" demanded Alden, impatiently. "The radiations from a Roentgen tube light pass through the plate holder, without the sun's light at all, and photograph the bones and other objects. So, with thought, which is a definite vibration of the ether, it is more delicate, yet more powerful than any artificial light or force ever generated by man's instruments. I will prove it to you."

"Try it now, then!" taunted Varney. "Why not get a picture of your thoughts?" retorted Alden, sharply.

Varney started nervously; then he smiled ingenuously.

"Well, my thoughts are not strong enough to make a record. You know, I do not claim to be intellectual. Try Miss Myra—have her think about me and we'll see the results."

"Very good," answered Alden. "Will you please sit down, Miss Myra, and we will make a try. We have two scoffers with us, however, and their thoughts may interfere."

Myra obeyed. Dr. Alden held the plate holder, closed tightly, to be light proof, against her low forehead. He was tempted to touch the alluring golden ringlets which framed the sweet oval face. But instead he averted his face and watched Varney, who was solicitously assisting Mrs. Maynard to don her street cloak. Myra's eyes had turned from Varney to Alden. She looked down in embarrassment as he suddenly caught the warm intensity of her gaze.

"I must be going, child, as Mrs. Watterson is coming over to talk about the club meeting next week. You can come on home with Arthur," said her mother.

She left the room and was soon speeding homeward in the automobile. Myra was silent and Alden intent upon his experiment. Varney fidgeted nervously, at last lighting a cigarette.

"Are you sure you are thinking about Mr. Varney?" asked Alden.

"Yes, yes, indeed," she replied quickly.

"Well, it is about time to develop the picture," said the doctor, looking at his watch.

He lifted the plate holder. Myra rose to follow him, with Varney, into the dark room. There he put the glass square through the usual process of washing, its bath in the developer, and finally in the hypo fixing bath. He peered at it against the dull crimson glow of the ruby light. Varney, standing behind them, was getting more restive.

"Have you any picture yet?" he asked, scornfully. "This close room is not what I would call a perfume shop. I cannot stand the odor of these chemicals very much longer, Myra. Please hurry up with the foolishness."

Alden was startled as he saw the image which appeared upon the glass plate. Myra looked at it and impulsively took it from him. It was the profile, not of Arthur Varney, but of Dr. Payson Alden! Her thoughts had indeed been traitors, caught in the net of the silver solution. As Alden started to speak, she interrupted.

"All right, Arthur, let us go home. Dr. Alden picked out a poor subject for his experiment, because the plate is absolutely untouched."

She placed the glass upon the developing table and Varney with a sigh of relief walked out into the light of the laboratory.

"I knew it was all nonsense. Some day, Alden, you will give up this silly business and return to prescribing for measles and mumps!" he said, as they started toward the lower oor.

Alden's face had been illuminated with a curiously happy expression. Now he laughed at the sarcasm.

"Well, some day I want to do so, Varney. A physician's work is the most inspiring in the world. It is a life of sacrifice for the happiness and safety of others. Its real reward is not in the payment of bills, but in the knowledge of successful battling against death and suffering."

"Why don't you stick to it?"

"Because I believe in completing one task before starting another. As a psychic practitioner I am working right now as a spiritual surgeon to remove from society a dangerous disease—a virulent cancer of criminality—so that it may threaten no more innocent lives. I am doing the best medical work, along a new line, of my whole career right now."

Varney shot a look of venom at the physician which was unobserved, as that gentleman was helping Myra with her street coat.

The trio left the house, to walk by a roundabout path to the Maynard home. A long jaunt it was, and Myra did most of the talking, her face illuminated and a strange gladness in her heart that the thought photograph had turned out as it had, that Dr. Alden knew her secret. Myra felt that, despite their anxiety, matters were working out toward a solution which would bring ultimate reward.

"I wonder if the Master of the Black Order is still in the land of the living?" she asked him, as they turned into the driveway of the residence.

"I wonder," mused Payson Alden.

"I wonder," echoed Arthur Varney, with a faint smile.

* * *

CHAPTER XXXIX.

The Gardener's Planting.

AS the three of them walked up toward the fine old mansion Myra say a man working over the hedge, with the thick scissors used by gardeners. His face was strange to her.

"Who is that man?" asked the doctor, quickly.

"I never saw him before. I'll ask," replied the girl. She walked over toward the man, nodding pleasantly.

"Who are you?" she asked.

The fellow touched his cap with a grimy finger.

"The lady just engaged me as the new gardener, Ma'am. My name is Joe."

"All right, Joe. I hope your work turns out well. We have needed some one to attend to the lawns and hedges for over a week. I attend to my own flowers, but will be glad to have you around to help me with your advice. Good day."

She turned away and the man again touched his cap. There seemed a shade of regret on his face, then his heavy mouth tightened and he continued his task of clipping the new shoots of the old hedgerow. As Alden and Varney passed, the latter shot a keen glance at the workman, and then looked away indifferently.

Within the house Mrs. Maynard greeted them, while Myra went upstairs to attend to the little vanities of adjusting her wind-blown curls and a tiny dab of the powder puff. She removed her hat. She tossed her street coat to a chair, and then, realizing that the room was close, she walked to the window to raise it. As she did so there was a sudden, sharp report from outside the house!

The glass of the window was shattered a few inches above the yellow head and her hair was covered with the broken fragments. She brushed the slivers aside, and jumped to the shelter of the wall. Then she walked quickly to the opposite side of the room, where the little jagged hole in the wallpaper betrayed the presence of the bullet which had grazed her so narrowly. She ran her fingers over it, with a shudder of apprehension.

Alden, followed by Varney, had dashed up the stairs. The two men peered into the doorway excitedly.

"What was it?" demanded the physician.

She pointed to the bullet hole, and then toward the broken pane of glass.

"Somebody fired at me through the window."

The physician turned quickly, and ran down the stairs, three steps at a time. He sped through the doorway to the portico. The gardener was working with a rake in one of the flower beds about twenty feet from the house.

"Did you hear that shot, my man?" demanded the doctor. "Come, now, some one tried to shoot Miss Myra."

The gardener shook his head, with an expression of incredulity.

"I heard something, sir. I thought it was the auto back-firing. That was all, sir."

"Where did the sound come from?"

The physician stared keenly at the workman.

"It came down that way, sir, as I recollect it," answered the gardener.

He pointed toward the distant street, far down the driveway, with a stupid uncertainty.

"That is too far away," declared Alden. "The shot sounded very near. Are you sure you didn't see anyone?"

Varney had come up behind Alden. The gardener reiterated his statement.

"I think the man is right," he declared. "The sound came from a long distance away, Dr. Alden."

The physician shook his head, and without more ado walked down the side of the yard toward a little summer house which was the only possible place of concealment for anyone on the premises. He entered this through the doorway, which faced Myra's bedroom window. Alden observed nothing more dangerous than an old green gardener's wheelbarrow, a few potted plants, and some flower boxes. As he came out, disappointed, he observed Arthur Varney questioning the gardener sharply.

"Well, what did you learn?" asked Varney. "This man is a stupid dolt, and knows nothing, I am sure."

Alden looked fixedly at the gardener, who returned his gaze without a quiver of the heavy eyelids. Then the doctor walked back to the house, followed by Varney.

"You must not worry Mrs. Maynard; it was doubtless an accident of some sort. Just let Miss Myra be more careful in the future, that is all," suggested Alden.

"It is a mere trifle," and Varney for the first time assented in an opinion with his rival.

But a sharp glance of subtle warning apprised Myra that the physician was sending her a wordless message of portent. The four of them took a long motor ride that afternoon, dining at a quaint old road tavern up in Westchester. When they returned it was nearly midnight.

Myra apprehensively asked the two men to enter, that she might look through the house for any possible intruders. Mrs. Maynard was annoyed, but Alden assented. They went through the house from basement to garret, and made sure that no marauders had secreted themselves.

Then, after a significant glance from the doctor, Myra urged them to remain a few minutes longer in the music rom. Mrs. Maynard politely half concealed a yawn and Varney accepted the hint by rising.

"It is later than I thought; why, it is after twelve. It is time for all good people to be abed," he said, with a look at Alden, as he walked to the door.

The doctor ignored the remark, bidding him a cool good night.

After Varney's departure Myra's mother resorted vainly to another visible hint, and finally excused herself with a reproachful look at Myra. But the girl pretended not to see her.

No sooner had the swish of Mrs. Maynard's silk dress been quieted then Dr. Alden turned to Myra.

"I suspect that new gardener of yours. Where does he sleep, Miss Myra?"

"Over the stable, in the groom's room. Our chauffeur lives at home."

"Well, I'd like to find out what blossoms of thought he is raising in the garden of his brain," was Alden's further comment.

"What do you mean? Thought photography?"

"Exactly. I fortunately happen to have plateholder with a new plate in my pocket. I am going up there and get an impression while he is asleep."

"Splendid," exclaimed the girl. "But you must let me go with you to show the way."

The doctor objected. But at last Myra persuaded him to let her accompany him. They were soon tiptoeing through the silent stable, and up the stairs.

The gardener they found sleeping heavily. Alden intensified his slumbers with a few skillful hypnotic passes. Then he placed the plateholder against the man's forehead for many minutes.

It's time now," he said, examining his watch with the aid of his pocket bulb-light.

They left as silently as they had come, after the doctor had released the hypnotic spell with a few gestures of the hands. The man slept on, unwitting of the visitation.

When they reached the house Mrs. Maynard was angrily pacing the hall floor.

"This is outrageous, Dr. Alden! There is a limit to my good nature. You had no right to expose Myra to the night air at this time. And besides, she should not be out of the house now with all the danger about her."

Alden apologized, trying to mollify her.

"We were experimenting with thought photography again," said Myra, as Alden helped her remove her cloak.

"Ridiculous! You come right up to bed."

Alden glanced at the long cheval mirror in the hallway.

"A splendid idea," he suddenly exclaimed, and impetuously he lifted it from its support, starting up the stairway with it. Myra's mother was astounded, but the doctor ignored her comment, advancing to the girl's room.

The moonlight was streaming through the window. Myra, at Alden's suggestion, pulled down both the black and white shades, and lit the electric lights.

"Now," said the physician, standing the mirror up at an angle from the window, "if Miss Myra stands right here at the side of the window, she will be protected and to any one outside the window it will appear that she is standing right in the window itself. If there is another 'accidental' shooting like this one today the bullet will go through the mirrored reflection. Do you understand."

Myra nodded, but her mother sniffed indignantly.

"All these scientific things have done nothing but bring on more trouble. You must go home, now, doctor!"

Alden laughed indulgently.

"All right. I apologize for wearing out my welcome, but it is not self-interest. I simply insist that Miss Myra stay in the house, keep away from all windows until after breakfast, and then at her normal rising time she pull up the shade from the side. Good night!"

He left Myra with an unusually ardent hand clasp, and the girl slept in her mother's room that night. Alden developed the thought photograph in the seclusion of his laboratory dark room before he went to bed. Whatever the result he seemed satisfied with his deductions.

CHAPTER XXXX.

The Machine Gun.

NEXT morning around breakfast time a certain deserted cottage on a hillside several hundred yards away from the Maynard home was visited by Arthur Varney and a companion who was carrying a leather case. Varney opened this cautiously and drew from it a powerful telescope. He adjusted this in the window of the eastern side of the house, training it upon the faraway window of Myra's bedroom. After fixing the focus satisfactorily he turned to the other.

"Well, it will be easy to see from here now. I wonder what is delaying the gardener?"

Even as he spoke the man sidled furtively in through a rear door. He touched his hat respectfully to Varney, and they exchanged the "thumbs-up" sign of the Black Order.

"Her shade is still drawn, so she is not awake yet," said Varney. "Is the mechanism all right?"

"Yes, sir. The automatic aimer is right in this box by the window. See?" and the gardener, who had been working for many hours since the dawn, lifted the lid of an innocent-looking dry goods box.

He raised on a pivoted arm a small device similar to that used in the conning tower of a battleship, for the electric aiming of the big guns in the turret. The Master, it was evident, was a genius along more material lines than the spiritual; for this contrivance was all his own in planning, connection, and execution. The sights were arranged in the line of vision through the power glass, and directed delicately at the windows still covered by the white drawn shade

"Oh, sir, do you think the Master will keep his promise to me?" pleaded the man, nervously. "You know one day has already passed since I swallowed that stuff."

Varney lit a cigarette and started to the doorway.

"The Master never breaks a pledge. You must keep your word with him. I will leave you here to carry out your duty."

Then he walked by a roundabout course to the Maynard home. As he reached the driveway Dr. Allen descended from the taxicab Varney had reached the porch by the time the physician had received his change from the chauffeur. The two rivals exchanged sharp looks, but spoke with formal politeness.

"I thought it would be wise for me to drop in, early as it is, to see how Miss Maynard is feeling this morning," explained Varney.

"That was my idea, as well," coldly responded the doctor.

As they entered the doorway, they heard a scream from Mrs. Maynard, who stood on the second floor at the head of the stairway.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed the doctor, running up.

Myra's mother had disappeared in the direction of the room of her daughter. Within Myra's room was further evidence of the tragic determination of the devil-worshipers! The big mirror was shattered by another bullet.

"Look!" cried Myra, as she stood in the shelter of the wall. "The bullet passed through the glass exactly where my head was reflected."

Alden had rushed downstairs once more. This time his action was carefully planned, in advance, for as he sped down the steps a policeman stepped out from the angle of the house where he had been concealed.

"Doctor! I saw it. It was from that summerhouse there—a puff of smoke went up from the door of it!"

Alden and the bluecoat ran for the summer house, with drawn revolvers. Again it was empty.

"This is just the way it was yesterday," began Alden, and then he began to pry around the old junk which littered the place. Now, however, he found something more definite. It was the muzzle of a sawed-off rifle.

Gingerly the physician drew it up, finding it arranged in a vice-like holder, attached to a tiny mechanism of wheels and springs. The whole arrangement had been cunningly concealed under the board flooring of the summer house.

"An automobile sighter," was the doctor's comment. "Let's see where these wires lead."

The policeman blew his whistle and a half dozen more officers appeared on the scene as though by magic. Arthur Varney, standing on the porch steps of the house, gave vent to a muttered imprecation, and bit off the end of a cigar, as his teeth closed in rage.

"What's all this trouble?" he asked of Alden.

"I've found the method, and now I'm going after the guilty party for I know where he is!"

The doctor, with his weapon in his hand, now hurried toward the stable. He was followed by Varney, Miss Myra and her mother, while one policeman stalked along grimly after them.

Alden rushed up the stairs to the gardener's room, and cautiously opened the door. The room was empty. Varney gave vent to another of his irritating laughs.

"I guess you must have had a bad dream last night,' doctor!" he taunted. "Your theories have been wool-gathering."

"Not at all," said the physician. "This man is the one who has engineered the deal; at least, his hand was on the throttle of the engine of death!"

The others had crowded into the deserted room, as Alden drew something from his pocket.

"How do you know that?" was Varney's question. Despite his rabid dislike of this interloping meddler, he was forced against his will to a profound admiration of the physician's subtle sleuthing."

"Simply with this!"

Alden held up a small photographic plate, which he handed to Myra. On it was a blurred image of a man's head, with two thumbs upturned on either side of the malevolent, snarling features. It was the face of the master of the Black Order.

"How did you get that?" And Varney's voice was tense and eager.

Alden looked at him, answering slowly.

"You ridiculed my thought photography yesterday—well, this is one time when it worked out right."

"Let me see it. I can't believe that such things are done.

Varney snatched the plate, studied it earnestly, and then bunglingly dropped it to the floor. The glass square was shattered hopelessly.

"Oh, excuse my stupidity!" he apologized. "I am so clumsy—this terrible affair has made me nervous."

Alden looked at him and then shrugged his shoulders. He started for the ground floor again.

"Well, it is of no consequence. We will get him yet. And there is a goodly supply of photographic plates still left. I have only begun to make my collection of thought pictures. Let us see what the police have dug up."

They found the yard deserted, except for a lone policeman.

"Where are the others, officer?" asked Varney.

In the distance they could barely see the blue figures rushing into the small structure. The four of them peered intent, to observe the men reappear, looking about the grounds, as though the trail had been lost.

This proved to be the case. The police captain was back in a few minutes to tell Dr. Alden of his failure.

"The birds had flown," he said. "We found a big telescope, and an automatic sighter at the end of the wires. They were laid about three inches deep in the dirt, and it didn't take us long to trace them up. But, you can't swear out a warrant against a telescope and a box full of wires and wheels."

* * *

CHAPTER XXXXI.

The Gardener's Reward.

IN the secret headquarters of the Black Order several of the black-robed brethren were conversing in excited whispers. Big things were afield as they well knew. But everything was uncertain, in suspense.

The gardener, after giving the regu-

(Continued on Page Eighteen.)

Like A Boy at 50 Bubbling Over With Vitality—Taking Iron Did It

Doctor says Nuxated Iron is greatest of all strength builders—Often increases the strength and endurance of delicate, nervous folks 200 per cent. in two weeks time.

NEW YORK, N. Y.—Not long ago a man came to me who was nearly half a century old and asked me to give him a preliminary examination for life insurance. I was astonished to find him with the blood pressure of a boy of 20 and as full of vigor, vim and vitality as a young man; in fact a young man he really was notwithstanding his age. The secret he said was taking iron—nuxated iron had filled him with renewed life. At 30 he was in bad health; at 46 careworn and nearly all in. Now at 50 a miracle of vitality and his face beaming with the buoyancy of youth. As I have said a hundred times over, iron is the greatest of all strength builders. If people would only throw away patent medicines and nauseous concoctions and take simple nuxated iron, I am convinced that the lives of thousands of persons might be saved, who now die every year from pneumonia, grippe, consumption, kidney, liver and heart trouble, etc. The real and true cause which started their diseases was nothing more nor less than a weakened condition brought on by lack of iron in the blood. Iron is absolutely necessary to enable your blood to change food into living tissue. Without it, no matter how much or what you eat, your food merely passes through you without doing you any good. You don't get the strength out of it and as a consequence you become weak, pale and sickly looking just like a plant trying to grow in a soil deficient in iron. If you are not strong or well you owe it to yourself to make the following test: See how long you can work or how far you can walk without becoming tired. Next take two five-grain tablets of ordinary nuxated iron three times per day after meals for two weeks. Then test your strength again and see for yourself how much you have gained. I have seen dozens of nervous, run-down people who were ailing all the while, double their strength and endurance and entirely get rid of all symptoms of dyspepsia, liver and other troubles in from ten to fourteen days time simply by taking iron in the proper form. And this after they had in some cases been doctoring for months without obtaining any benefit. But don't take the old forms of reduced iron, iron acetate or tincture of iron simply to save a few cents. You must take iron in a form that can be easily absorbed and assimilated like nuxated iron if you want it to do you any good, otherwise it may prove worse than useless. Many an athlete or prizefighter has won the day simply because he knew the secret of great strength and endurance and filled his blood with iron before he went into the affray, while many another has gone down to inglorious defeat simply for the lack of iron.—E. Sauer, M. D.

NOTE.—Nuxated Iron, recommended above by Dr. Sauer, is not a patent medicine nor secret remedy, but one which is well known to druggists and whose iron constituents are widely prescribed by eminent physicians everywhere. Unlike the older inorganic iron products, it is easily assimilated, does not injure the teeth, make them black, nor upset the stomach; on the contrary, it is a most potent remedy, in nearly all forms of indigestion, as well as for nervous, rundown conditions. The manufacturers have such great confidence in Nuxated Iron that they offer to forfeit $100.00 to any charitable institution if they cannot take any man or woman under 60 who lacks iron and increase their strength 200 per cent. or over in four weeks' time, provided they have no serious organic trouble. They also offer to refund your money if it does not at least double your strength and endurance in ten days' time. It is dispensed in this city by James O'Donnell and all other druggists—Adv.

AMERICAN GENET IS FIGHTING FOR FRANCE

Great-Great-Grandson of Diplomat Writes of Experiences in the Trenches.

PARIS, June 11.—Edmond C. C. Genet, one of the American volunteers under the French tricolor who have remained in the Foreign Legion, came to Paris recently on the customary week's leave of absence. His vacation ended, he returned to the fighting zone, reaching the railhead nearest his regiment just at nightfall. Here he met two other Legionnaires also returning from a furlough. The three comrades started off together in the gathering darkness to find their corps.

The legion is at present in a rather quiet sector of the front and its trenches are located in a dense forest. At places the French and German lines are 1,300 yards apart at other points quite near together. Genet writes of how he and companions came near falling in the hands of the Germans.

Simple Matter to Get Lost.

"On returning here I nearly prolonged my permission—in the wrong direction," he writes. "I walked a little bit too far when I landed on the line the night of the 28th. It was uncommonly dark, and in the dense woods among the many, many paths and trenches it was all too simple a matter to become confused.

"When I got that strange, uneasy feeling that something was out of place—namely me—you can picture the rather riotous retreat we three made. We got so near the Boches we could hear them talking. We finally found the Third Company of the legion and decided it was best to wait until dawn to do any more searching for our company, so spent the remainder of the night there. I am thoroughly convinced that a man of this strange outfit is far safer on this side of the line, especially an American at this particular time.

"We are in the trenches just now, and I expect it will be some time before we return to the rear. Not only that, but I feel sure there is going to be a strenuous offensive started by the French before long. Let it come; the sooner the better, and we'll drive the Boches back where they will cry 'Kamarads' in grim earnest and for keeps.

Would Fight for Uncle Sam.

"The papers are giving reports of a very near severance of friendly relations between the United States and Germany. I am glad to be bucking up against the Boches with France, but I surely will be overjoyed if the time is at hand, when I can face them in the ranks of Uncle Sam."

Genet is the great-great-grandson of Citizen Genet, who was French minister in the days of Washington. One of the ministers sons married a daughter of George Clinton, revolutionary governor of New York, and it is from him that Edmond Genet is descended. Edmond was one of the crew of the United States battleship Georgia when war broke out between France and Germany and his mother bought his release that he might come to Europe to fight for the land of his ancestors. The young Legionnaire is only nineteen, and he has been at the front for more than a year. His home in America is at Ossining-on-the-Hudson.

Girl Was Stricken Dumb When She Was Discharged

ST. LOUIS, June 11.—Declaring she was stricken speechless when she was discharged by her employer, Miss Nelly McGlenn, thirty-two years old, stood on the stairway in the building from 9 a. m. until 9:30 p. m., when she was taken to the City Hospital and placed in the observation ward.

Then Miss McGlenn went on a hunger strike at the hospital, saying "she could not eat if she could not work." Forced feeding was employed, the patient fighting the attendants.

Dentists Can't Grab Teeth.

MADISON, Wis., June 11.—If a man acquires a face full of gold crowns under an agreement with a dentist that he is to pay cash when the job is completed, can he be prosecuted for obtaining property under false pretenses if he walks out without observing that formality? He cannot. Attorney General Owen said so in an opinion to District Attorney J. L. Kelly, Princeton.

ANACOSTIA TO KEEP ON CARNIVAL DRESS

Decorations Will Stay Up Until Thursday, When Program Will Be Concluded.

All decorations at Anacostia for the carnival which was cut short by the rain Friday night, will remain in place until next Thursday evening, when the program will be concluded.

Privates homes and business houses in Anacostia will be illuminated tonight, when the public is invited to Anacostia.

Announcement has been made that all invited guests and other citizens who were to be present Friday night, are requested to attend Thursday evening. There will be a baseball game between two teams of the Potomac League at 5 o'clock. A country circus will be staged at Fairlawn at 7:30 o'clock, and there will be public speaking at 8:30 o'clock by the Commissioners, officials of the street railway, and others.

At 10 o'clock there will be fireworks and dancing. All the lights at Fairlawn will remain in place. A band will play.

SOUGHT AS ASSASSIN, IS FOUND MURDERED

Italian, Missing for Year, Victim of Black Handers, Who Hid Body.

EASTON, Pa., June 11.—With the legs tightly bound by wire and the body weighted with heavy iron plates, the body of Vincenzo Nunsera, alias "Jimmy" Rossi, was recovered yesterday from the hole of the abandoned Northampton slate quarry near Pen Argyl. Nunsera is the man the Easton police have been trying to find since November 4, 1915, when, they say, he murdered Pietro Giaimo, a trackman, while the latter was working on the Northampton traction line at Seventh and Spring Garden streets, by slashing his throat with a razor.

The police charge that Nunsera was not only a murderer, a white slaver, and the head of a Black Hand gang that had terrorized Easton, South Bethlehem, Bangor, and other towns in the slate belt, but that he fell a victim to his own gang by failing to play fair with them in dividing their spoils.

County Detective Neimeyer had tried for months to get trace of Nunsera, and Lawrence Cordotto, who was said to have been with the former on the day that Giaimo was murdered. Cordotto was found at Strudsburg three weeks ago, and arrested. He denied connection with the Giaimo murder, but said that Nunsera himself had been murdered.

He said that he had accidentally witnessed the crime; that Nunsera was first killed and then the body was wrapped with wire, weighted down, and thrown into the quarry hole.

John Wollers, a diver from Philadelphia, came here Thursday, and yesterday, on his sixth attempt, brought up the body from 105 feet of water.

Late this afternoon James Curra, was arrested at Pen Argyl, and Cordotto identified him as one of the men who had murdered Nunsera.

Insists Upon Being Taxed For $2,000 Worth of Dogs

ATCHISON, Kan., June 11.—On the assessment rolls of Brown county the name of F. E. Kelly, who lives on the Kickapoo reservation, is down for $3,510 worth of property. Mr. Kelly's hogs, cattle and implements are valued at $1,510, and twenty dogs at $100 each. They are hounds.

County Clerk John Mathewson thought there was a mistake in entering the assessment and took the matter up with Kelly. The owner of the twenty dogs insisted on standing pat on his returns, and in addition to paying personal taxes on the twenty hounds, he will also have to pay the regular dog tax.

THE MYSTERIES OF MYRA

An Inspiring Novel and Motion Picture Drama

Written by Hereward Carrington.
Dramatized by Charles W. Goddard.

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(Continued from Page Twelve.)

lation signals, entered the room. He looked about nervously.

"Did you succeed?" the leader of ceremonies bluntly demanded of him.

"Yes, brother. Our cause has been successful. I have come to claim my reward."

The leader disappeared behind the somber hangings. He reappeared almost instantly.

"Come within. The Master awaits you."

The gardener followed. The inner chamber was dark and the man groped helplessly for an instant. Then the red glow began to suffuse the room and the face of the Evil one appeared. Instinctively the gardener's clenched fists went to his cheek, the thumbs upturned above his ears. A rasping voice rang out in the fetid, incense-cloyed room as the gardener dropped reverentially to his knees.

"What is the result, brother? Did you obey my mandate? Has the will of the order been fulfilled?"

The gardener stammered, and then answered thickly.

"Yes, Master. She is dead. Give me the antidote which was to be my reward. I feel the poison already working."

He stretched out his hands imploringly. The Master's face had now become discernible in the glowing light. The evil pontiff was posed as usual, with his thumbs in the diabolical, horn-like gesture, his face appearing above the black altar. He lowered his hands and clawlike fingers, drew forth a white vial, filled with some liquid, appearing before the anxious eyes of the gardener.

"And so you have obeyed me? You have earned forgiveness and life."

"Yes, Master. But be quick. I feel the poison gnawing at my heart even now."

The gardener's eyes dropped before the piercing bite of the Master's somber eyes. The Master rose from his position, taking his fingers away from the coveted vial. The gardener stood up, arguing, pleading with a frenzied intensity.

"You fool," snarled the ruler of the villainous cult, "you lie! You are a blunderer! I know the truth. You cannot have the antidote—you must meet the fate which is decreed by the order. Death is your portion now."

The gardener cunningly noticed the isolation of the vial. His fingers close convulsively about it. Apparently yielding to the inevitable, he dropped his head and turned away, secreting the vial. The Master and the leader of ceremonies exchanged smiles. He left the room without intercedence.

Once in the outer apartment, he hurriedly left the place. Down a lonely lane he ran, free from the fear of the brotherhood. He ran into Arthur Varney, who pointed an accusing finger at him.

"You have failed!" cried the latter, angrily, "I will tell the master."

"I know I failed!" cried the man, exultantly, "But I have obtained the antidote!"

With the words he gulped down the contents of the vial and ran on. Varney started to follow, then changed his mind. He quickened his pace and was soon in the company of the master.

"Fear not, Varney. The man will earn his own reward! The first pill that he took was harmless. The contents of the vial—which he stole from me—were—well, he will find out."

Varney did not understand. But outside of the Maynard mansion the gardener was staggering with increasing weakness. Alden was stepping down from the porch to the ground. He pointed toward the gateway excitedly.

"Look, there he comes now!"

As he spoke the policeman had grasped the man and was dragging him into the gateway. The gardener lost unconsciousness and the bluecoat lifted him bodily, bringing him up toward the house. Alden rushed toward them and saw the froth upon the man's twitching lips.

"The man is poisoned," cried Alden.

He drew a hypodermic from a pocket medical case, and endeavored to bring the fellow back to consciousness. The man's eyes rolled, but he seemed unable to speak. At last, after several minutes of work, the unfortunate victim's lips moved, and Alden leaned over him to catch every word.

"The Master poisoned me. You will find him in the new rooms under the old"—

Alden shook the man's shoulders excitedly.

"Where is the order?" he cried.

Mrs. Maynard and Myra were sobbing, while Varney was standing quietly in the rear of the group.

As the man opened his eyes again, Varney walked away to the edge of the porch, out of view.

"I cannot bear to see these poor fellows die," he told Alden later.

Meanwhile all efforts to restore the man were unavailing. The policeman took down the data, and sent in a call for an ambulance which arrived in a few minutes from the nearby branch hospital. But no science could prevail against the deadly drug that was eating at the unfortunate's vitals.

"Poor chap! He's a goner," was the remark of the ambulance surgeon. "But we'd better rush him down to the ward to see what we can do."

Dr. Alden endeavored to ease the shock to the girl and her mother, after the unfortunate had been borne away with the bluecoat riding with him.

"Well, it's another miscarriage of the evil plans. I wonder what they will do next?"

Dr. Alden was destined to learn even sooner than he expected.

(To Be Continued Next Sunday.)

See this episode today at the Hippodrome, 9th St. and N. Y. Ave.—Advt.

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Dept. 953 Brockton, Mass.

MAIL SACK ROBBER MISSES A FORTUNE

Daring Thief at New York Grand Central Picks Least Valuable Bag.

NEW YORK, June 11.—Out of hundreds of registered mail bags, some of them containing many thousands of dollars, a robber, or robbers, at the Grand Central Terminal last Wednesday night picked about the least valuable of all, by a scheme which is described as unique and daring.

With only eleven minutes' leeway, a man crawled under the platform ledge of track No. 14, where train No. 35, the fast Western mail, was loading, and grabbed an inside sack, which might have contained bank balances en route between Chicago and New York. He found himself later in possession of a sack consigned to Portland, Ore., filled with registered packages, one of which contained a $10 bill, another a broker's invoice, three or four with small articles of jewelry, and others with nondescript merchandise. On the same platform in pouches exactly similar were fortunes.

Carries Valuable Mail.

Train No. 35, made up entirely of mail cars, leaves the Grand Central Terminal at 9:31 every evening. It is the aristocrat of all mail trains, for it carries such things as bank clearances not sent by express, Government deposits, and things of like value. It would make the fortune of any train robber, but it travels with the speed of the Twentieth Century Limited, and it connects at Chicago with mail flyers which make record trips to the Pacific coast.

The train is made up on platform No. 14, on the upper level at the Terminal, and when it is making ready that particular platform is as closely guarded as a foreign ruler. However, under the projecting ledge of the platform is a shelving space about three feet wide and four feet high along which the "knockers," the men who test wheels and air brakes, can go just before a train pulls out.

It happens that at the far end of the platform an excavation on the Lexington avenue side of the terminal begins. No one thought of this Wednesday night when the registered mail arrived at 9:15 for the 9:31 train. There was not much time to think of anything, for it all had to be done in sixteen minutes. It was known further that at 9:26, five minutes before the train's departure, the "knocker" would come along and examine everything under the platform.

Find Empty Sack.

The man who did this on Wednesday night found an inside pouch, which is smaller than one of the big leather cases, ripped open and lying on the track. Everything had been taken from it. The checkers inside the car discovered at once that it was the Portland pouch and reference to the postoffice record showed that it had contained eleven pieces.

Postoffice authorities said yesterday they had discovered that some one working with a platform man or aided by a hook had abstracted the pouch from a pile on the platform. He had known that he had only eleven minutes to do the trick and had taken a chance of getting something valuable. The total value of the loot was only a few hundred dollars, it was said.

Found Guilty on Charge Of Soliciting Bribes

MUNCIE, Ind., June 11.—Gene Williams, deputy prosecutor, was found guilty of conspiracy to solicit bribes today by a jury here this morning.

The penalty is two to four years in Jeffersonville penitentiary. Williams will file bond for appeal.

TRADE BOARD TO HEAR OIL MEN TOMORROW

Federal Commission Ready for Last Phase of Gasolene Inquiry.

The Federal Trade Commission tomorrow will enter on the last stage of its effort to find the "reason why" for the high price of gasolene.

The commission's hearings on this subject are to begin tomorrow. Nearly two score oil companies will have representatives present to give their views on the soaring price of automobile fuel.

Commissioner Harris will conduct the hearings. They will be held at the Department of Commerce and may last for several weeks.

For some months the commission has been engaged in a study of this question. Since this began the cost of gasolene has varied little. The report is formulated and awaits the inclusion of the ideas of the oil men about the situation.

When the hearings are ended not much time will elapse before the report is sent to Congress.

Children's Day.

Children's Day was observed at the Mt. Pleasant Congregational Church today. The Rev. Clarence A. Vincent preached a sermon especially appropriate for children, a large number of boys and girls were baptized and a special musical program was rendered.

FITS

We have sworn statements from patients cured of Fits, Epilepsy, Falling Sickness or Convulsions by free sample of Dr. Roof's remedy. We PAY EXPRESSAGE FREE TRIAL BOTTLE if you CUT OUT and RETURN THIS AD your letter. Hundreds of testimonials on file. Give age and full particulars.
Dr. F. HARVEY ROOF CO. Dept. A, 1471 Sta. N, New Yor

"At Last! Something Different!"

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Those Who Walk In Darkness

A Complete Novelette By Perley Poore Sheehan

It is but one of the many features of this week's issue, which is beyond all question the biggest dime's worth on the stand. Its interest never lags—from first to last it holds the attention of the reader. Read it, together with the other good stories

In the June 10th Issue of

All-Story Weekly

THE MAGAZINE OF SURPRISES

OTHER FEATURES

Trader Brayne's Daughter

By Vance Palmer

Beginning another absorbingly interesting serial by this popular author. A series of remarkable adventures transpire on the west coast of British India, which are as strange as they are unusual. In four installments—the second part will be published next week.

On The Ham-and-Egg Circuit

By John G. Miller, Jr.

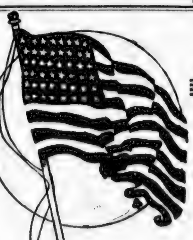
Rather an unusual title, isn't it? Just as its peculiarity catches your eye, so will the story hold your interest.

Professor Barker Harrison-Tartar

By Achmed Abdullah

If you read much modern fiction you will have learned something about the theory of reincarnation. A new and startling application of this theory is to be found in this story, written by a master of Eastern lore.

10c--At All Newsstands Now--10c



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The Mysteries of Myra An Inspiring Novel and Motion Picture Drama

Written by Hereward Carrington.

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Dramatized by Charles W. Goddard.

Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.

Myra Maynard, a beautiful heiress, is pursued by a band of Black Magicians. They desire her death so that the fortune of her father, a former member of the Black Order, may fall to them before her attaining legal age, according to his secret will. Dr. Payson Alden, a brilliant young physician, who has devoted several years to the study of the psychic, learns of their activities and repeatedly saves Myra's life by outwitting the criminals with their own science. His efforts are made especially difficult by the secret connivance with the Black Order of Arthur Varney, a wealthy clubman, who is in love with Myra. Varney is held by fear of the High Master to many attempts to end the girl's life.

Under the instructions of the physician the girl learns to do mental telepathy and astral procetion into space of her "soul" body. During one of these experiments the Black Magicians almost succeed in cutting the astral thread between the astral and the flesh-and-blood body. The spirit of the High Master is cunningly substituted within the girl's body by the leader of the Devil Worshippers and terrible havoc results. By unusual cleverness Payson Alden succeeds in restoring the girl to her own body. The Black Order menaces his life many times and he barely escapes from their imprisonment, while his Hindoo assistant is slain. Poisoned owers, gas balloons filled with deadly vapors, dynamite explosions—all these physical efforts are included in the various means which the Devil Worshippers apply to encompass Myra's death.

Myra has learned to love the doctor, but has mistakably accepted the proposal of Arthur Varney. Alden is growing more and more suspicious of his rival, but can not fasten guilt upon him definitely. Varney and the High Master both project their astrals into Myra's bedroom, where they are mysteriously materialized into new bodies again. They endeavor to slay the girl, but are baffled by Alden's electrical "soul trap."

The last attempt to slay the girl has been with the use of an automatically aimed rifle placed by a new gardener. This is thwarted, with the unexpected result that the gardener, who has been the hireling of the Black Order's ruler, is poisoned by the High Master. He dies on the porch of the Maynard home just as he is about to betray the location of the new headquarters of the society.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Myra's Strange Malady.

"IT is just a case of nervous rundown, Mrs. Maynard," said the family physician, soothingly. "It puzzled me at first, but now I find that there is no real cause for worrying. Miss Myra must simply eat good, wholesome food, take this tonic three times a day and take ten drops of this nerve medicine every hour."

"It is not my nerves," protested the girl, as she reclined in the big library chair, a bewitching vision of pink and white, attired in one of those semi-boudoir gowns worn by convalescents. She was weak and wan, yet her spiritual beauty seemed more intensified by her illness. "I never felt so calm and forgetful of nerves in my life, Doctor Crawford. It just reems as though all the strength were being squeezed out of my heart!"

"Tut, tut!" and the old physician resented this questioning of his diagnosis. "My child, I have treated you through every sickness of your life. I know exactly what you need. I will prescribe two additional combinations which I wish you to take punctually, according to the directions on the bottles. You will find that you are another being, after twelve hours."

True to the tradition of so many old school practioners, he deluged the girl with a variety of weird drugs, and then departed with a comfortable sense of duty well done.

"Oh, dear, I will spend every minute of the day with a medicine spoon in my mouth," sighed myra, as she twisted uneasily in the chair.

She drew a sharp breath, as she pressed her hand to her heart.

"What is it now, dear?" questioned her mother anxiously.

"It is just a terrible pressure here—which seems to stop the beating. Oh, this is the second day of this agony, mother. I wish I had not been too silly yesterday—I should have told Dr. Alden how serious it really was."

"There, child, it will be better. Good old Dr. Crawford never makes a mistake. Just rest and be calm, and stop worrying over all this silly occult business. You are through with that forever, dear."

Her mother walked toward the door, as she heard the bell ringing. Willis answered the summons and returned with a tastefully large bouquet.

"It is for you, Miss Myra," and the butler placed the fragrant token in her lap.

"How beautiful," and a flush of delight came to the white cheeks for an instant. "Just what I wanted; I wonder who sent them. Oh, see—it's Dr. Alden's card!"

Her mother frowned.

"Myra, as the affianced wife of Arthur Varney, I do not believe it is right for you to show so much interest in Dr. Alden. You are wearing Arthur's ring."

Myra dropped her eyes, and a tear trickled down her cheek.

"I can't help liking my friends, mother," was her meek protest. "And Dr. Alden and I have so much in common. He has done so much for me, while Arthur—well, I do not understand why I ever accepted him—your insistence had much to do with it, and I am far from happy."

Mrs. Maynard looked away almost guiltily, and left the room abstractedly. She felt a vague uneasiness herself over the prospective marriage. Yet Arthur Varney was, according to a maternal standard, a "good match." He was handsome, debonair, of immaculate social position; his means were ample. Most appealing of all, perhaps, his attitude to her, Myra's mother, had been one of flattering deference to every wish. Every act seemed planned for Mrs. Maynard's particular pleasure; every opinion of hers seemed to find echo in his suave acquiescence. In short, Mrs. Maynard's interference with her daughter's future was based upon the same self-interest which has influenced the lives of so many daughters.

Dr. Payson Alden was so different in type. His gallantry could not be gainsaid. Yet, so many times since he had come into their lives he had overridden her opinions; ignoring the maternal decrees, with a calm assumption of superiority most nettling. And, most irritating of all, he had proved himself in the right.

In short, Dr. Payson Alden was not the sort of young man to make a meek son-in-law. To Mrs. Maynard, as to so many other mothers, this was the unforgivable objection.

Even as Myra buried her face in the cheery blossoms the physician came to inquire about her. He was admitted to the library; the girl's weakness frightened him. After the first words of greeting, Alden took out his watch to count the girl's pulse.

"You have no fever, but your heart action is very weak, Miss Myra. You are a great deal sicker than you were yesterday. I don't like this a bit. Dr. Crawford's prescriptions are all right—perhaps. But he did not diagnose your case correctly."

"Why, Dr. Crawford is one of the oldest practitions in the city," began Mrs. Maynard indignantly.

"Exactly. That is the trouble with him. He is still living in the mid-Victorian era of drug cures. There is more here than the need of bitter medicines. This illness is not altogether natural."

"What do you mean, doctor?" and Myra looked at him sharply.

"Well, I will soon find out. Dr. Albert Abrams, of San Francisco, has invented a wonderful machine, which I am now testing. I will bring it here," he explained.

There was a knock on the door, and at Mrs. Maynard's call, it was opened to admit Arthur Varney. Alden signaled to the two women to maintain secrecy, as he rose to bow stiffly toward the newcomer.

Varney bore in his arms a large bunch of flowers, but after his first greeting his eyes were drawn with a jealous glint toward the bouquet on the table.

"I am so sorry you are ill, my dear girl. I haven't slept a wink, worrying over you. I do hope you are better, for I have several important things to tell you—and in confidence."

Alden caught the hint, and smiled toward Mrs. Maynard.

"Let's you and I talk confidences, too, Mrs. Maynard," he suggested.

Myra's mother agreed, although the girl protested at their leaving. No sooner were they out of the library when Varney rushed angrily toward the table.

"Who sent you these?" he demanded, as he reached for the white card.

"Oh, just a friend," was the evasive reply, with a note of irritation in the words. "You know, Arthur, I have a right to my friends. Haven't I?"

"Yes, but Myra—you are letting this man come between us. I see his name here. His flowers are more appreciated than mine. Remember, you have promised to marry me!"

The girl's eyes flashed as she followed his look to the sparkling solitaire on her slim finger. She caught at it with her other hand and removed it with a jerk.

"Here, Arthur! We are no longer engaged. We have been both of us laboring under a terrible mistake—a mental misfit—long enough. I do not love you, Arthur! I promised you that I would reconsider, after telling you this same thing the other day. We are doing wrong by carrying the matter any further!"

Varney flushed and mopped his brow nervously. A strange gleam fired his eyes as he turned away for an instant. He gulped and then faced her once more, pleadingly.

"Myra, you must not throw my love aside now!"

"What do you mean by that?" asked the girl. "I am sick—unto death, Arthur. I believe my illness is caused by my horrible anxiety over our engagement. My heart seems to be getting weaker every hour, but I am afraid to tell mother how serious it really is. We must end our engagement now and forever."

"Not now, Myra, if you have any fairness in your heart for me." Varney lowered his voice dramatically. "I have made a great sacrifice for you—to help you in your trouble. At first, I scoffed at the whole business, but I have seen too many proofs that there is some evil, occult force."

"What is your sacrifice?" and Myra leaned forward. Her heart hurt her again. She was forced to lie back once more; a surprising spasm of pain distorted Varney's face, as though her suffering stirred some strange echo within his own. He looked away, before he continued:

"For your sake, Myra, I, too, have delved into the occult. During the last few days I have obtained old Hindoo books, and have even gone to some teachers, to learn more about it. A terrible thing happened to me."

"What was it?" Myra could hardly believe that the scoffer had so changed; yet there was undeniable candor in his voice and manner.

"I can't tell you, except to say that I tried in a very short time to cover the work of years. One night I went too far!"

"Arthur, you must tell me. I am your friend, you know, even though we cannot marry." She stretched out her soft hand sympathetically, and he looked straight into her eyes, the tears suddenly springing into his own. "Tell me, Arthur. If I could help you I would, indeed I would! I know what it is to suffer in that way."

Varney hesitated, and then sat down rather miserably. To surprised Myra, who had never seen this expression of hopelessness upon the usually immobile face, here was a deepening mystery.

"Yes, you have promised to help me, and I will hold you to your promise," began the man. "You are the only person in the world who can save me!"

CHAPTER XLIV.

The Fleeting Star.

"TELL me what happened, Arthur."

"I will, but you must pledge yourself to secrecy—never tell about it to either your mother or Dr. Payson Alden. If you will not promise, I cannot tell, and I am simply, irretrievably lost!"

Myra hesitated and then nodded her head.

"I usually keep confidences, Arthur. Some people do not."

He looked at her sharply, and reddened. Then, ignoring the reproof, he unfolded his curious story.

"It was just a few nights ago that I finally obtained these old volumes on the astral. They were printed in English, by some funny old publisher in India. They were in poor grammar, as they had evidently been translated by a native. But they were so queer and so simple apparently, that I became lost in them. The first book told of 'concentration.' I thought I knew what concentration was before, but until I followed the rules laid down there, I never realized how the Orientals attain such mental strength."

He rubbed his forehead as though it were sore to the touch.

"First, I put my mind on a distant mountain, according to the quaint rules. Then, after thinking about that for hours, I concentrated on a peak of the mountain—one over in Jersey, with which I was actually familiar. After more hours of this—thinking about nothing but the tip of that mountain—I applied all my mind power to a tiny pebble on that tip."

Varney laughed nervously, as if half ashamed of his words.

"It sounds silly, doesn't it? But I have been told that is exactly the way the Orientals—the Yogi students—do it. At last I spent about four hours concentrating on the idea of that tiny speck of mountain—and the first thing I knew I was absolutely unconscious and woke up late in the afternoon, a wreck."

"But, Arthur, that was not so terrible," remonstrated Myra.

"Not the first time. But after I had done this several times, and after many hours of motionless concentration, following the rules of the boks, something happened!"

The girl regarded him with awe, for his face was chalky, as he recounted it. Here was no simulation, indeed. The man was frightened and suffering.

"I was sitting on the floor with some queer figures drawn in a five-pointed star in front of me, just as the instructions read. Every one of those signs meant something in the psychic, and I was putting my soul into first one and then the other."

Varney's voice sank to barely more than a whisper.

"Just as I felt a new thrill—something mad, burning within my head, I felt a blinding flame before my eyes—felt it rather than saw it. I could even smell it! It had the perfume of some queer, ghastly incense and it scorched my nostrils as I tried to breathe. Oh, Myra, it was terrible!"

Varney rubbed his forehead.

"Right here it came: it seemed like a bright star then which had come from within my brain. It burned for an instant and then floated away from me!"

"What on earth was it, do you suppose?" demanded Myra, sitting bolt upright again.

"It was my soul, Myra! And now I have lost it because I tried to do too much at once! I reached for it but it passed right out through the walls of my room. My forehead has hurt me ever since, but something else hurts worse. I find out from the books and from a very good friend of mine who understands these things that it was what the Hindoo philosophers call the "Kundalini." Now it is gone forever, and forever!"

Varney, no longer the sarcastic, imperturbable, now burst into deep sobs and buried his face in his hands. Myra rose weakly, and put her soft hand on his shoulder, as she tried to comfort him.

"Arthur, do not feel so badly. I'm sure you can have such things healed. How could I help you?"

"I was told," he said, looking up at her imploringly, "that only marriage with a pure woman like you could bring it back to me. Love is the only restorative for a lost soul, and you are the only thing in this whole wide world that I love!"

Myra drew back horrified.

"It is impossible, Arthur——"

He persisted, catching her hand and endeavoring to slip on the engagement ring once more.

"I am now an 'elemental' Myra. Without your love my soul must die eternally when this present body dies!"

Myra had drawn away her hand, and Varney, with drooping head, rose, walking dejectedly toward the door. The girl watched him, her gentle breast a prey to the keenest anguish of pity. She called him.

"Arthur, put back the ring. I will try to help you—we will try together a little bit longer."

With a kind cry he replaced the golden circle, and kissed the flashing stone impulsively, although the girl trembled with repugnance at the caress.

"You should ask Dr. Alden's advice," she ventured.

"Never. I would ask nothing from that fellow. But, I must go now, for I do not want to see him again. And I forbid your letting him come here any longer. Do not forget your pledge of confidence, Myra."

Varney kissed the limp hand again, and then retreated toward the corridor, as Myra sank down upon the couch. He had gone! And now she looked at the baleful glitter of the solitaire upon her finger.

"It seems as though his soul had left him, and fastened itself upon me, in this crystalline star, to sap my vitality and my spirit! Oh, why did I weaken? Oooh!"

She moaned and sank unconscious on the couch, her misery relieved for the minute by the comforting blanket of Nature's anesthesia.

Alden had already left the house for his own laboratory, and Mrs. Maynard was forced to call Willis and the maid to her assistance before she had succeeded in reviving the girl. Myra's heart was fluttering now, more palpably than ever. Each breath seemed to make her weaker, by a tiny degree

MYRA SLOWLY RESPONDED

CHAPTER XLV.

The Gyrograph.

IN his laboratory the physician was testing a new instrument for the registering of the invisible forces of the mind. This was the gyrograph, invented by Dr. Albert Abrams, the California specialist, which he had already mentioned to Mrs. Maynard.

It was a curious arrangement of delicately balanced threads, upon a central standard; from one of the filaments was suspended a small pith or cork ball.

The nature of the instrument was such that it received certain delicate transmissions of energy, through thought waves of certain people. It had been used scientifically to measure the psychic strength of various experiments. When a message was sent, through the medium of the person holding the light end of the silk thread, and thence the weight, it would (as the doctor had seen in past experiments on other instruments of the same make) register the thoughts of a third person. It was to detect the person of the third thought force that he sought. One of the assistants who had helped the doctor to construct the life-saving ultra-violet lamps in Myra's home was now sitting before the instrument holding the string and weight.

"You don't need to laugh, Dan," said the doctor. "This is an instrument which really does things—even though you and I may not have mind enough to make it work. Now, just keep quiet and think about the string. I'll send you the message, while I stand behind you."

He took a key from his pocket and held it in front of his own face. He concentrated on this object for a full minute, of intense silence. Then he put it in his pocket and crossed to the gyrograph, leaning over it.

He was doomed to disappointment. Nothing had happened except a more expansive grin on the face of the incredulous workman. Once more he tried, but this effort likewise miscarried of result. A knock at the door disturbed him. As he called "Enter!" rather irritably, he was astounded to see an attractive young woman enter timidly. She was holding an envelope which she handed to him.

"That will explain my coming, doctor," she volunteered, looking about the strange room with natural curiosity. "The maid did not want to let me in, but he told me to go right upstairs with his note, as he knew that you were in a hurry right now."

"He? Who is he? And how did he know what I wanted right now?" Alden was puzzled.

"Read the note," replied the girl with a dimpled smile.

Alden tore open the missive. It was a brief message from his friend the psychic; now he understood why his secret thought had been divined so correctly.

It read:

"Dear Dr. Alden:—

"This will introduce Miss Marjory Stowe, whose psychic powers will interest you.

"Sincerely yours,
"BERT REESE."

The doctor extended his hand more cordially now.

"Splendid, Miss Stowe. I am delighted that you came as you did. I have heard Mr. Reese speak of you. You can help me right away if you will sit down before this gyrograph. I want to see if the instrument is trustworthy."

"Yes, doctor. I'm rather sensitive medium. I have seen this worked before."

Miss Stowe sat down in the place vacated by the dubious Dan. Alden's face lighted with enthusiasm now, and the girl cast an admiring glance at the handsome features. The look did not escape the watchful workman, who chuckled quietly.

"Sure, the boss do be a hypnotizin' the purty girl," he muttered. "It ain't right for wan man to have all the girls alikin' them, with others none at all."

But Alden was engrossed in his experiment. This time it succeeded. He mentally imprinted the image of the key, and the thought of the key, to the exclusion of all other ideas from his mind, upon the mind of the girl sitting before him. She held the end of the thread, and they were all silent, until suddenly the thread began to swing the cork up in a curious series of spirals.

"Look, doctor! It works!" cried the girl, enthusiastically, and Alden bent over her delightedly.

"Splendid! Congratulations, Miss Stowe! You are indeed a sensitive of high power, for I barely began to concentrate on the matter."

As he drew out his watch to test with that object, the telephone bell rang.

"What a nuisance," muttered Alden, as he turned to answer it. But his impatience changed to concern and agitation as he listened.

"Myra has had another serious fainting spell, and thinks you may be able to help her," said Mrs. Maynard, at the other end of the wire.

"I will be right over, Mrs. Maynard. Good by."

He hung up the receiver excitedly, and turned toward the other girl.

"Miss Stowe, you have come at the very nick of time. A friend of mine is very ill, and it is not from a weakness of the physical. I am trying to learn what the cause is, and I believe you can help me greatly. Will you accompany me to her house?"

"Yes, indeed, Mr. Reese told me to follow your instructions in every way. He is very much interested in your case," she replied, willingly.

Alden excitedly packed the gryrograph, and some other boxes were brought down to the taxicab which he had hurriedly called on the telephone. Before long they were ascending the porch steps of Myra's home, carrying the packages of apparatus.

Mrs. Maynard received them. She was greatly excited, and after Alden had introduced Marjory Stowe, he gave her the first attention with a little prescription of bromide to calm her. Myra was sitting up again, but it was evident that she was very exhausted, with some curious languor taking more and more possession of her.

"Well, I have found a wonedrful little medium in Miss Stowe," Alden explained, with an enthusiastic glance at the girl. "I am sure she can help me a great deal from now on. We are going to start right away with Abrams' gyrograph.'

Alden turned to his workmen and they began to set up the instrument. For the first time in her friendship with Alden Myra felt a new sensation of the oldest heart malady in the world—jealousy. Majory Stowe was undoubtedly a very attractive girl, and Myra realized that Payson Alden could not be blind.

She took an instinctive dislike to the girl, but was too well bred to exhibit anything but her most gracious manner.

"Sit down, Miss Stowe. You know, the Doctor and I have had some very unusual experiences together. I hope that you can teach me about your own work," but before she could add more, or receive a response Alden was ready.

"Now, Miss Stowe," and his tone was the brusque, businesslike order of a surgeon to a nurse during an operation. "Please turn about here, hold the thread and remove all thoughts from your mind. Be absolutely receptive."

The girl obeyed with a trusting eagerness to assist him, which was a further irritant to Myra.

"Open your mind for all thought—none of us here must think about you," and he gave orders to the others. "I want you to receive the mental or spiritual influence of some one else—outside of this room, whose thought is being directed here!"

"Why didn't you let me try?" asked Myra. "This is the first time that you have kept me out of the work."

She was a trifle petulant, and Marjory smiling handed the thread to her.

"You are too tired," said Alden. "But, if you really want to do it, all right!"

Myra took the end of the indicator and was still. Suddenly the cork began to bob excitedly through the air, swinging in oblique circles, then intercrossing strangely—far more excitedly than in the effort back in Alden's laboratory.

"There! what did I tell you?" asked Myra, triumphantly.

Alden was on his knees before the instrument watching it carefully.

"I wish you could tell me how to read the writing which that cork made!"

"Writing?" echoed Mrs. Maynard, incredulously.

"Certainly, it was writing. It represented several words—a complete sentence repeated over and over again! I wish to heaven I knew what it meant."

As he urged Myra to repeat the experiment, Marjory Stowe had observed a curious article unpacked from one of Alden's boxes by a workman. It was a Planchette board—made of delicate, resonant wood, with an indexing on one side while three felt-tipped legs supported it on the small table, curiously marked with the alphabet which accompanied it.

She placed it on the table, and despite the disapproval of Myra's glance, she began to work it. That is, to free her mind of all thoughts, closing her eyes and holding her fingers with the lightest possible touch upon the flat surface.

Alden turned to observe her, and quickly drew his prescription pad and fountain pen from his pocket. Although the girl's eyese were closed, the board began to move around on its alphabet'c surface meaningly. Its first movement spelled the word: "S-L-O-W."

"What on earth can that mean" muttered the doctor. "Try it again, please."

Marjory waited, but was forced to admit that she could bring no further results.

"Let me try it?" asked Myra triumphantly.

Alden took the board to her side by the couch, and she followed the example of the other girl. But she, too, was to be disappointed. She was sitting up on the couch now, and, apparently feeling a sudden relief from her weakness. But without warning a paroxysm seized her, and she almost collapsed.

It seemed as though some force had been resting for a brief period, to be resumed again with renewed power.

"Here, here, you must lie down!" counseled Alden, anxiously. "You are getting weaker all the time."

"Let me try just once more," pleaded the girl, gasping for breath. "Something tells me I will succeed this time."

Myra persisted, and, closing her eyes, waited for results, although swaying so weakly that her mother placed an arm about her shoulders.

"We should stop this silly business and call our regular physician, good old Doctor Crawford," began Mrs. Maynard.

The board was beginning to move.

"Be quiet! Don't interrupt with your old doctors!" commanded Alden, sharply.

The board now went zig-zagging down the alphabet until its little pointer indicated the letter "Y." Alden noted this down on his pad.

"The next one is 'O'," he murmured.

The little pointer seemed now to be journeying with individual intelligence. Rapidly it spelled out, according to Alden's record, this surprising sentence:

"Your heart must beat slower—and slower—and slower'"

Alden read out this message, to the amazement of them all. He was the only one not surprised!

"I have it now!" he cried, but just then Myra collapsed once more.

Mrs. Maynard shrieked, and Alden waved her aside as he rushed to the side of the couch.

"I'll cure her now!" he cried, "for now I know the disease."

He pressed his fingers on the girl's white temple, then stroked slowly, and with a firm pressure, up between her eyes to the roots of her blonde ringlets. Her eyes closed, and Mrs. Maynard began to sob, thinking that the girl was dying.

"Sssh!" cautioned Marjory Stowe, who understood. "Don't disturb her—he is hypnotizing her."

Alden gave a few more delicate hypnotic strokes, and then stood up. The girl was in a cataleptic trance by this time.

"Counter suggestion is what she needs," he muttered, half to himself, as he rubbed the palms of his hands briskly together. Then he placed his hands upon her forehead again, leaving the fingers in light but certain contact.

"No, not slower, but faster! Not slower, but faster! YOUR HEART MUST BEAT FASTER AND FASTER AND FASTER AND FASTER!"

He fairly roared the words, and to her mother's surprise, as he dropped his hands limply to his side, the girl sat up smiling. Within ten minutes Myra was walking about the library, declaring that she was feeling better than at any time in the last two days!

"That is wonderful, Dr. Alden. I am sorry I spoke of getting Dr. Crawford, for I am sure you are every bit as good as he."

Alden laughed amiably, now that the tension was past.

"It's a temporary cure, for I found out what was behind all this evil influence. But, I must operate on the disease!"

"Operate?" and Mrs. Maynard was frightened once more. "I will not permit Myra to be operated upon without a consultation of surgeons. By no means!"

"I don't want to operate on Miss Myra. I only want to use an instrument, which I am having sent up here this afternoon, with which to operate on the evil minds that are besetting her. I want to cut out all the evil power of their activities and then apply that bad power where it will do the most good."

CHAPTER XLVI.

Capturing Evil Magnetism.

LATER in the afternoon, Alden had completed the erection of a curious contrivance of black cloth and strips of wood, which resembled nothing so much as the inside of a huge, stretched umbrella. His workman, for all their ignorance of his purpose and the high skill behind his scientific work, were used to the eccentricities of experimental schemes. They obeyed his commands promptly, and at last produced an arrangement which seemed to satisfy his captious inspection.

The arrangement was hung in Myra's bedroom from a porcelain coated, and hence nonconducting, hook, driven into the ceiling. It could be swung in all directions and Myra was still as mystified as her mother and Marjory Stowe, who was still their guest, at Alden's request.

"Look, I will explain something," and Alden led Myra to the window, where he held a concave focusing mirror in the rays of the afternoon sun.

He directed the tiny shaft of golden light from it to the table close by.

"Now, put your finger there, Miss Myra—right in the light!"

She did so and drew it back promptly.

"It is very hot—how strange."

"Not at all—the mirror merely concentrates the rays of the sun into a certain focal point. So does this lead painted umbrella collect the thought waves directed at it. The lead prevents the waves from passing through its curve, just as does the silver on the mirror. Instead of reflecting them straight back, the curve of the umbrella directs them at one center point. By finding that point—which will be directly opposite the center of the umbrella cavity, I can tell the direction from which the waves come. Then I am getting a compass of directions for my search of the Black Order."

Myra and the others listened in silence.

"This instrument," went on Alden, "is an electroscope. It is as you see a glass container, holding two gold leaves delicately supported. When strong thought influence is concentrated upon them the leaves will spread. Then we will begin another little experiment!"

At his direction one of the women began to turn the umbrella in a slow circle following Alden with it, as the doctor walked slowly around the room in a larger circle. The physicial was watching the leaves in the electroscope carefully.

He stopped, with a murmur of triumph. Then he backed slowly toward one wall of the room. He stopped, came forward, raising the instrument at first and then lowering it.

"Now fasten the umbrella exactly in that position," he ordered, while the others maintained a discreet silence.

This was obeyed.

"Quick get a table for me. I have found the exact spot in which all the evil magnetism is centred by the focus."

A table was pushed out to him, and he stacked some books under the electroscope so as to keep the exact spot marked.

"Now, with the psychic Leyden jar, Dan, quick, for we have no time to lose."

The workman and his companion brought up a huge glass jar, containing some rods of metal with curious knobs pendant upon them. This was placed in the room, with its top rod at exactly the spot which had been occupied by the electroscope.

"Now, Miss Myra, let this collect all the energy our unseen workers wish to give it! But, under no circumstances must you bring any one into this room, and above all let no one touch it until I return late tonight."

The girl promised and Alden departed with Majory Stokes. This angered Myra—perhaps that was why she was unusually pleasant to Varney who came to call that evening to find out how she was feeling. His surprise at her rapid recovery was unbounded.

"Dr. Alden must be a very good artist with drugs and love potions," he snarled, his eyes flashing with jealousy.

"Well, he is mixing up something worse than drugs for some one," Myra smiled confidently. "Some one has been willing to make my heartbeats lower. Dr. Alden says that is what was the trouble with me."

Varney's face fell.

"You don't mean it!" he faltered.

"Yes, indeed. But Dr. Alden has fixed a machine which will cure the other person. He said I must not show it to any one, but I'll let you peep. You think he is foolish, but you will learn from this that he is a very clever man."

This laudable pride in the doctor was bound to cost them dearly.

Varney followed upstairs. He was worried. As Myra opened the door he gave an exclamation of alarm as he saw the curious, ominous contrivances within.

"Don't be alarmed," Myra said. "It won't hurt you. But you mustn't touch, that's all."

But Varney was too inquisitive on the subject. He extended his hand to the big jar—and seemed to receive a terrific galvanic shock, for he clutched his heart, gave a groan, and staggered to the floor, falling on his knees.

"Oh, Arthur, are you hurt?" cried Mrs. Maynard, as the two helped him to his feet.

"No, no!" he groaned, pressing the left side of his breast in agony. "But I must get out into the open air!"

Myra and her mother looked at each other dumfounded, as they saw him rush through the front door and disappear, going down the driveway.

"I guess Dr. Alden knew what he was talking about," said Myra. "I had better telephone him about this."

The doctor was experimenting with another apparatus in his laboratory when he received her message. He laughed dryly when she told him the result ow Varney's call.

"So he received a little shock, eh? Well, I'm awfully sorry, awfully sorry! I'll be over there in a little while and we will give some one else a shock."

He kept his word. When he reached the girl's residence he produced a large brass megaphone horn with some wires attached to the mouthpiece, the latter being virtually closed tight. With his workmen assisting him he walked around the room studying the angle of the umbrella.

"I wonder where Varney is now? He must be having a little heartburn even yet, for he has received some of this pentup energy in his system."

At this particular instant Arthur Varney was bursting through the black velvet curtains of the High Master of the Devil Worshipeds, in the heart of the secret meeting rooms.

"Varney, what do you mean by this?" came the rasping voice. "Why disturb the toilers? Do you not see that they are concentrating on the human heart which has been laid upon the unholy pentagram of our order?"

Varney looked over his shoulder. There before the fiendish altar sat a circle of thirteen men bowing back and forth as they chanted their murderous mantra. This time it was in English.

"Your heart must beat slower, slower, slower!"

And before them, in the center of the weird circle, lay a human heart, against which they all addressed a gesture with their empty hands as of squeezing and crushing it!

Varney nodded.

"Master, I have terrible news. Alden has collected our thought energy and intends to hurl it back at us!"

The Master lost not a sound. He laughed discordantly, and crashed a brazen summons on the great Chinese gong at his side. The leader of ceremonies appeared, bowing low.

"Let the brethren depart at once to various points of safety to avoid the attempt of this miserable Alden. You go as well, Varney. I am always safe."

Within a minute they were all scurrying in different directions like so many frightened rats. The master had sought safety in his lead-lined cell. Then he began to fume.

"Where is my black crystal? I want to get the messages, if any are sent!"

He looked about the room, and was afraid to go out. He hesitated by the leaden door.

Alden was holding the brass megaphone up to the Leyden jar, waiting for the supreme moment. Myra, sitting in an easy position in a large chair, was gazing fixedly into the crystal globe through which she had seen such strange visions before. The tenseness of her fingers betokened the tremendous nervous strain under which she was watching the crystal.

"Tell me what you see? Quick, Miss Myra. Have you seen the man with the upturned thumbs?"

Alden was holding the megaphone in readiness, aiming it in the direction away from the concavity of the lead-lined umbrella.

"No, not since that first glimpse—oh, oh!" and she was fairly screaming. "I see him now, NOW!"

"All ready!" cried Alden with a battling ring in his voice. "Shoot!"

At the word he touched the metal end of the megaphone to the top knob of the Leyden jar. He was protecting his own hands with non-conducting silk wrapped about his wrists and fingers.

There was a terrible flash, and even the doctor was temporarily dazed by the tremendous spark which seemed to shoot like a thunderbolt through the side of the room. The women screamed and Dan dropped to his knees as though expecting gun play. Then all was calm.

"Anything in the glass?"

"Yes, I see in the crystal the form of a man lying face downward! He does not move. Now it fades from view," said Myra, and she shivered, dropping the crystal to the floor.

"Yes, I'm sorry. But I believe we hit the bull's-eye that time," said Alden. "It has been worth the bother if we succeeded in hoisting him with his own petard."

(To be continued next Sunday.)

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CHAPTER XLVI.

The Astral Alarm.

DR. ALDEN had several days of freedom from the haunting miseries of Black Order persecution. Nothing untoward had happened to Myra, and events were so quiet and orderly that the physician began to pick up hope that his ultra-violet rays had indeed accomplished the destruction of the evil genius who presided over the band of Devil Worshipers.

Mrs. Maynard, anxious to free her mind of the distractions, was jubilant.

She confided to Arthur Varney, during a family motor ride through the suburbs:

"I am so glad, Arthur. These last few weeks have been a worse nightmare than the week my husband died. Dr. Alden has been very thoughtful, very gallant in his friendship for Myra, in her trouble. But, my dear Arthur, I confess that he irritates me with his continual science!"

Varney nodded soothingly.

There was a faint suggestion of a smile, as he watched Myra through the corners of his eyes.

'Science is all very well in a laboratory or a college room, but in everyday life it becomes a decided bore!"

Myra flushed.

She turned sharply, as she retorted: "Arthur, this very automobile was invented by scientific men, not by idlers who were always looking for good times. It is true that the automobile gives more pleasure to stupid, lazy, donothings with money than anyone else. * * * Why don't you try to do something with the brains, the health, and the hands that God gave you, Arthur?"

Varney's confusion conquered his usual complacency, but Mrs. Maynard interrupted tactfully.

"You are out of humor, my dear," said Myra's mother, gently. "You could not have slept very well last night!"

Myra nodded her head. She drew her little hand across her brow as though she suffered from a headache.

"You guessed right, mother," she said. "I have had the most unpleasant dreams lately. I feel more exhausted each morning than I do at night when I retire. I wish I could forget all this horrible stuff!"

"What you need, my dear, is a change of scene. I have half a mind to pack our trunks," her mother declared, "and simply disappear with you. We will go away for a few months and not allow anyone in the world to know where we have gone."

Varney looked at her anxiously.

"Not even me?"

"No, not even you, Arthur, for there is no telling who may read your mind," Mrs. Maynard replied. "These terrible creatures, whoever they are, seem to know everything, no matter how secret it is kept!"

Varney shook his head, belittling the danger. He had his own reasons for not desiring Myra's disappearance from the scene at this juncture.

"I wouldn't do it," he said. "Dr. Alden declares that his lavender light, or whatever he calls them, have killed the ringleader. The doctor ought to know. And it would be better for you to rest right here in your own home than take chances in some strange place."

But he was plainly uneasy on the matter. When they returned home they found Payson Alden waiting for them. Varney made his excuses and rode on downtown to his club. The physician, awaiting his departure, impatiently, now brought up a plan upon which he had been working for some time.

The story of Myra's unpleasant dreams emphasized to him the need for prompt action.

Her remembrance of the dreams was unusually clear. They had been recurring for three nights in succession, without change in the curious pantomime. A group of black-garbed men had seem to float through the air, to her bedside, she told the doctor. There they stood throughout the night, waving their hands toward her in rythmic cadence.

She demonstrated with serpentine movements of her own hands. Alden nodded understandingly.

"Those are hypnotic passes," he declared. "It is just as I have suspected. They have exhausted all the simpler forms of black magic. Now they are resorting to astral visitations in groups. Those were not the phantasies of troubled dreams. Those were the astral bodies of the Black Lodge members, sent upon a definite mission by that cunning scroundrel, the High Master."

Myra's face paled, for her recent experience with the astral, whereby she had so nearly lost her own soul, was still a bitter memory.

"What can I do, Doctor? I am so frightened of it all, even though I have tried to be brave!" Her slender white fingers trembled, as she nervously intertwined them.

"You succeeded in being braver than any man would ever have been, under such frightful circumstances," retorted the doctor encouragingly. "Just keep up that good spirit a bit longer. The study of years is now coming in handier than ever. One of the newest inventions of psychical research will warn us of this danger. It will notify you when the unseen bodies are hovering about you, but will warn me, as well, back in my home. Then I will be ready to protect you."

He clasped the little hands with an invigorating firmness, as he looked down cheerily into the big blue eyes.

"How can that be?" demanded Myra, cheered in spite of her haunting premonition of new peril.

"I will show you inside of an hour. I must first telephone to my assistant, Dan. He will bring the things over here. May I start to work on them at once, then?"

"Surely, Doctor," agreed the girl. "But we must absolutely pledge poor mother to secrecy, for she makes such dear stupid blunders. She has spoiled so many of your plans, and yet you are always so patient with her."

Alden smiled generously.

"Your mother is like nearly everyone else. Despite what we have shown her, she still doubts. And she must tell her doubts to others. I am afraid that there is a 'leak' in information, somewhere about the house. After this, we must be very careful with the servants. Willis, the butler, is the only one I really trust."

So it was that in little over an hour a workman, who had announced to the maid that he came from the electric light company to make some repairs, appeared in the library carrying a heavy bundle of apparatus.

Alden, after swearing Mrs. Maynard to absolute silence, sent him around the house to adjust a special wire to the roof, directly over Myra's window.

This connection was brought inconspicuously into the room, and carried along the wall to a three-paneled screen which had been arranged near Myra's bed. One side of this screen was of ordinary appearance—a decoration of embroidered Japanese silk. But on the other, the face nearest the bed, were hundreds of delicate vertical wires a quarter of an inch apart, running parallel with each other from the top to the bottom crosspiece.

[illegible] watched with awe, as the physician ran his fingers up and down the wires.

He had been too busy instructing his assistant in the delicate task of arranging the connections to explain the nature of the instrument. But now, satisfied with his preparations, he turned toward her with a smile.

"Well, we are ready for the astral travelers!" he exclaimed. "This wiring is coated with a chemical called sulphide of calcium—a substance that glows in the presence of an astral body. So this is the important part of our alarm."

He turned toward the butler and his workman-assistant.

"It is all right," he said. "You may go now."

When they had left the room he took from a grip a small selenium cell, such as used in electrical experimental laboratories. This he placed on the floor near Myra's dressing table. By its side he laid a storage battery and a small electric bell.

"This cell," said, pointing to the containing case, "is so delicate that it will not let electricity pass through it in the dark. But its composition is such that in the light it will conduct a current. So, you may see how this can be utilized."

He conducted the storage battery with the bell, and attached the wires to the tiny tabs on the side of the selenium cell case. Then he removed the cover, allowing the light to strike the sensitized cell.

There was a jangling of the electric bell!

Myra clapped her hands as delightedly as a child with a new toy.

"Oh, that's wonderful!" she ejaculated. "But how about that with the astral bodies?"

"There's the point—if an astral body, or more than one, should come to this room, the wire screen coated with sulphide of calcium will glow. The light will fall on the selenium cell—whose lid you are to remove, when you have turned the lights off—and that will connect with this outside wire. That leads directly to my rooms, and will ring a warning bell there, to let me know. So, have no fear, for tonight I will be able to act."

Mrs. Maynard shook her head hopelessly when they tried to explain the apparatus to her.

"I can't believe such things," she said. "You may be sure that I will tell no one about it, because they would think me very silly to even allow you to put it in the house."

Alden and Myra exchanged smiles, and went downstairs to enjoy their afternoon tea without further efforts to convert her.

CHAPTER XLVII.

The Master Instructs.

WITHIN the dismal quarters of the Black order an unwonted air of excitement was noticeable among the evil brethren.

The leader of ceremonies was talking earnestly with Arthur Varney, now garbed like the others in the flowing black robe and hood.

Suddenly the crash of the Master's gong resounded through the eerie room. Seven times it was struck, and the members bowed toward the swinging curtains which shut off this compartment from the inner room of their ruler. This signal meant a secret session of the most trusty workers of the sect; it was a call to the pit of the coffins, far underground.

Varney, the leader and four other members exchanged the sign of the order, thumbs up, fist clenched against fists, and then walked slowly through a low door in the rear of the council room. This was shut and barred behind them, as though to guard against even the curiosity of the remaining brothers.

Within the coffin room, where standing on end were thirteen grewsome caskets arranged in a circle, the six members knelt to await the appearance of their guiding spirit.

Suddenly one of the coffin lids flew open, sideways, like a door.

The sardonic features of the High Master were disclosed, in the curious crimson glow which always seemed to hover about him in the lodge rooms.

He leered, with keen scrutiny of the averted faces, as he returned the diabolical sign of the society.

"Are you ready for the last step in the mystery of the hands?" he asked.

"Yea, master. Yet we are weary from the struggles of the last three nights!" answered one of the kneeling men.

"You will be wearier still, from this night's work," snarled their ruler. "But this will be the end. I have no place for weary idlers here. And there is no place for Black Order brethren to go from this council but to death. * * * So, beware of disobedience!"

The members bowed.

The master seated himself upon a coffin, and beckoned to the leader of the ceremonies.

"Lie upon the floor!" he commanded.

His order was obeyed, although with evident apprehension of what was to follow. The master waved his hands toward two of the brothers, as he spoke to Varney.

"Hypnotize them, and bring forth their astrals!" he ordered curtly. "I will do so with the other two."

Varney stood before one of the men. A few dexterous passes of his hands and the skillful pressure between the eyes of a tense thumb caused the subject to pass into the cataleptic condition which was the preliminary of the projection. The second man responded readily, as did the third and fourth under the master's manipulations. So practiced in this uncanny work were they, and so used to the mental dominance of the master, that the mesmeric effect was almost mechanical in its prompt response to suggestion.

The master now pressed the foreheads of all four, in turn. He walked toward the recumbent figure of the leader of ceremonies, and waved Varney to one side of the room.

"Let your astrals come forth!" he cried with strident tones. "I command you to walk to the side of Brother Zela!"

Varney was watching intently, mystified at what was to ensue. Unhypnotized himself, the separation of the spirit from the fleshly bodies was invisible to him.

"Now, two stand on either side!" called the master. "Place your astral hands above Brother Zela and lift! Lift! Lift!

Varney had never seen spirit levitation of material objects before. He was astounded to see the form of the leader suddenly rise a few feet from the ground, unsupported by any visible things. He turned to look at the stiff, unconscious figures of the four men. They hardly seemed breathing; there was no indication of muscular activity in their rigid limbs.

"Now bear him to the side of the chamber!" commanded the master.

The body, floating as it seemed, on space, was borne in the direction indicated by his peremptory gesture.

"Now! The supreme test of the astral strength!" called the ruler. "Use all your forces—rise from the ground and lift him with you! There—there! Lift! Lift!"

The strange sight of the leader's body being raised against the high vaulted ceiling of the great room sent a thrill of horror through Varney, used as he was to such supernatural scenes.

A word from the master, and the leader was brought back to the spot from which he had been raised. The ruler walked toward the four taut figures, snapped his fingers sharply before their eyes, and the sleeping faces twitched.

"Awake!" he commanded. "Awake!"

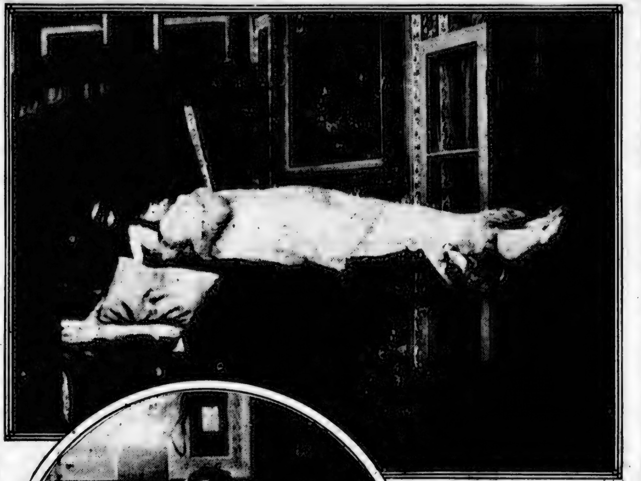
Their eyes opened, and they gazed about them in surprise.

"It is successful!" gloated the master. "I have taught you well. Tonight we will succeed, for we have brought to our resource the greatest power of the physical world, combined with my psychic strength!"

The men shuddered, and rubbed their arms, as though they ached from some tremendous straining of the muscles. The master gave them minute instruction for the task of the coming hours, and Varney gave strict heed to the important details which were his to consummate.

* * * * * * *

Alden was busy working in his bedroom. He had attached a new electric wire to a wall lamp, which had been adjusted in such a way as to throw a ray of light upon the pillows of his bed.



MYRA SEEMED TO FLOAT AWAY

ALDEN WAS AWAKENED BY THE TELEPHONE.

An electric bell was affixed to the wall, close beneath the lamp. At last he seemed satisfied with his arrangements.

"Now, let them bring on their astrals!" he exclaimed, lighting a cigarette, to walk about the room, surveying his handicraft from different angles.

As if in answer to his challenge the bell suddenly jingled, while the electric torch glowed.

"Great Scott!" he muttered, making sure that he had not given his apparatus a cross circuit." It is from the other end of the wire. Yet, it is not dark yet. They can hardly have sent a visitation at this time."

He was perturbed, however. He ran toward the telephone and was soon talking to Myra.

"What has happened?" was his anxious greeting.

He was answered with a silvery laugh.

"Oh, ho; Ha, ha! How ridiculous!"

"But, I don't understand? Has anything frightened you?" he persisted.

"Yes, it has!" was the surprising reply." And a very horrible beast, sir! It was a mouse! It ran across by bedroom floor and made me clamber up on a table. I had to call Willis to the rescue!"

Alden was astounded.

"But I got the signal that an astral body was in the room. Go look at that selenium cell, to see if it has been disturbed," he said. Myra did so, and reported that Willis had taken the lid off to hunt for the little gray miscreant.

"Well, keep it covered until you go to bed. I'm glad it was nothing more serious. I'll see you at the dance tonight, however Good-by."

He rang off, laughing. "Not a bad way at all, for testing the wires," he told himself. Then he made certain memoranda for his night's work.

And back within the unholy solitude of leaden-lined chamber, the high master of the Devil Worshippers was even busier in planning his own line of activities.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

The Treacherous Varney.

THE Maynard mansion never looked more beautiful than it did when Payson Alden arrived that night. Mrs. Maynard was entertaining a number of the girl's friends with that conservative yet charming hospitality which was so characteristic of the real aristocrat.

The music room was festooned with smilax, the walls decorated with flowers, and the gardener had brought in from the conservatory of the estate a great array of the exquisite potted plants and flowering shrubs which had been the especial pride of Myra's father in his strange life of seclusion and study. The whole lower floor of the house was transformed into a veritable fairy bower, while the gay young people danced in the dressing room, through a garlanded doorway into the music room.

Myra, however, was the fairest blossom of them all. Alden's gloved hand trembled as he held hers, feasting his eyes upon the sweet vision of maidenly loveliness.

Her glorious wealth of golden hair was coiffed simply, yet so alluringly that he longed to caress it.

The ivory shoulders gleamed bewitchingly through the shimmering folds of silk. The depths of those azure orbs, turned up so joyously to his ardent glance, seemed more immeasurable than the arch of a summer sky.

"I'm so glad you have come," Myra told him." My dance order has made me most unpopular, for I have selfishly insisted on saving several waltzes for you, my Lord Tardiness."

"I could not help being late," Alden apologized, "for there were still some things to figure out, to make arrangements for quick action in case our alarm should * * *

A warning in the blue eyes interrupted him. Arthur Varney had approached them, his handsome features flushed with the jealuous anger which burned within.

"My dance, Myra," he began, impatiently," and it is half over now. Hurry now!"

Alden restrained with difficulty a thoroughly excusable smile; the irritation of the other man was in a sense a compliment to himself.

And during the dances that followed he became more and more assured that Myra's preference for him was sincere enough to give his rival good reason for anxiety.

During one of these heavenly waltzes he did not observe the actions of the other man, who deliberately evaded a dance with an impatient girl at the far end of the drawing room. Varney, with a quick look about to see if he were observed, walked into the empty library.

He sat down in the big chair near the telephone battery-box, adjusted on the baseboard of the wall, near the floor. With a quick movement he leaned forward and inserted a tiny wedge of wood between the small clapper and the bell.

Half an hour later he repeated this operation, with equal secrecy, on the other extension.

Then he joined Myra and her mother, as they bade good night to the happy guests.

Alden longed for a farewell word with the girl, alone, but Varney was too ubiquitous. The other man watched every move he made, and was tenacious in his attendance.

So the physician satisfied himself with a wealth of meaning in his glance as he shook hands for the third time.

"Telephone me at once if you have any trouble," he said, as he went away. And Varney bit his lip with a droll light in his eyes. He followed the others shortly. His manner was triumphant.

The dancing had tired Myra more than she realized.

"Well, mother dear," she exclaimed, after the doors and windows on the lower floor had been securely locked by the cautious Willis, "I feel as though I could sleep for a week, without dreams, this time."

"I hope so, child," said her mother tenderly. "You have gone through dreadful experiences for a girl of your age. I hope it will soon end—these things leave scars on the memory which never really heal."

Myra was soon in bed, and had almost drifted to sleep when she suddenly remembered that the selenium cell had not been uncovered. She sprang to the floor and arranged it carefully, in the darkened room, with shades drawn to exclude even the moon's rays.

Then, like a child tired with too much play, she relaxed, too exhausted to worry over the threats of future trouble which had usually kept her sleepless for hours.

* * * * * * *

In the lead-lined chamber of the High Master, Arthur Varney stood before the unconscious figure of the evil pontiff, who had commanded him to hypnotize him.

Many minutes he waited, until at last the features of the coarse face twitched and the black eyes opened.

"I visited her room, in the astral, Varney. All is ready. She has left her window open. Now go, at once, with the brethren. Do not delay. No one knows of this, I am certain," said the Master proudly.

But even as he was speaking Payson Alden sat up in bed with a start. The wall light sent its sharp rays into his sleepy eyes, and the electric bell had barely ceased its jangling.

"Great Scott! The astral alarm!" he cried, as he ran toward the telephone.

He jerked the receiver from its hook in a frenzy of terror for the girl's safety. There was a provoking delay before the central operator gave the provoking reply: "The party doesn't answer, sir. You had better wait until morning."

"Try again!" he exclaimed. "It is a matter of life and death! Hurry!"

But no response rewarded his impatience.

At last he hung up the receiver. He was certain that something more grave than he had conjectured must have occurred in the big house if not a single soul were there to answer the call.

He hurriedly donned his clothes, placed a revolver in the pocket of his ulster, drew on an old hat, and ran from the house.

It was very quiet in the semi-suburban district in which the Maynard estate was located. But the shaded street was not as deserted as was its usual wont, in this early hour of the morning.

A great black limousine, driven with noiseless engines, had come to a stop on the street, sheltered from the view of the house by some broad-spreading beech trees.

Arthur Varney, with his neck and chin covered with a black silk muffler, was the first to step out of the car. Behind him came the leader of the Black Order ceremonials.

Four other brethren descended to the pavement and stood together in a whispered conference.

"It is the hour commanded by the Master!" said Varney, looking at his watch in the dim light from the automobile's side lamp. "Get back into the machine, and we will begin!" commanded Varney.

The four men obeyed, as Varney clambered into the limousine behind them.

There in the darkness he gave strange commands, and made the manual gestures which had been taught him by the Master. The four men were soon cataleptic and he spoke to them with the tense, authoritative manner of his chief.

"Go to her bed room and will that she be levitated out of the window," he commanded. "I will wait below!"

There was no reply, But Varney was certain that the astral form had already left the physical shells behind. He slipped from the car, and followed by his sole remaining companion, Brother Zela, cautiously advanced through the shrubbery toward the summer house in the garden.

The two men, with faces muffled in the folds of black handkerchiefs, now darted across a bare moonlit space, to the shadowy refuge of the rustic summer house.

"You wait here and I will carry her to you!" he commanded.

All this time, Payson Alden, running with a speed which he had never attained in the best days of college prowess upon the athletic field, was speeding toward the Maynard home, his heart sinking with every step that drew him nearer.

It seeemd as though he would never reach his goal.

Within Myra's bedroom the screen suddenly began to glow with a dull crimson glare!

The girl stirred uneasily in her sleep, as the horrid dream of the past three nights made its new visitation. The waving hands of the four dim spirits seemed to quiet her, however, as by a hypnotic spell.

Then it seemed to her that they were exerting some new and dreadful power upon her. She felt as though each of the eight sinewy hands were extended in the shape of a huge magnet. She was being drawn, drawn with a terrible, burning force, which seemed to tear at every muscle every bone, at her very heart.

Payson Alden had reached his journey's end at last. The sight of the black car caused him to whip out his revolver, and he peered cautiously inside. He saw apparently four sleepers or drunken men

"What can it mean?" he thought. But he dismissed this perplexity from his mind, to rush through the shrubbery and toward the Maynard home.

Arthur Varney tood beneath Myra's window with hands extended, as though waiting for something to be laid in them. Alden saw the masked figure, and darted into the summer house.

As he did so he bumped into the hiding Brother Zela.

The two men closed in a death grapple.

Around the wooden floor of the structure they struggled noiselessly, Alden fearing that a shot from his revolver would warn the man beneath the window.

Suddenly from the open window above, the figure of Myra Maynard seemed to float out on space.

Slowly she appeared, in the dim light of the moon, advancing from the orifice mechanically, inch by inch, as though drawn with difficulty by an unseen power.

Varney was impatient!

"Hurry!" he whispered.

But the inanimate body of the girl was provokingly slow as it swung free of the wall, and then gradually came nearer and nearer to him.

Within the summer house the combat grew more furious.

Alden felt the clutch of muscular fingers at his windpipe.

It seemed as though his eyes must pop from his head, his tongue cleave to his throat, in that almost maniacal grasp. Here was no unskilled battler in this dread science of the professional strangler.

But, remembering the training of gymnasium days, he suddenly managed to get a "half-Nelson" grip about the antagonist's brawny neck.

His right arm slid down, between the other's shoulder blades, and hope sprang anew in his heart.

He heard the crunch of a bone, as he slowly twisted an arm, backward, and then upward, until his opponent's wrist was touching his own neck.

One arm at last free, Alden brought it around with all the force he could command, against the other's chin!

The fight was over!

He rose to his feet, peered toward the house, and to his horror saw Myra Maynard's sleeping body, clad in the shimmering silk night dress, clutched in the arms of the masked man.

He drew a line on the fellow's head with his revolver, but was astounded to see the other run toward him.

"Psst!" was the warning signal from Myra's captor, as to his amazement, the sleeping girl was thrust into Alden's own arms!

Then the other man disappeared, running fleetly toward the entrance to the driveway.

Alden, cautiously peering about, disappeared with the girl in his arms, gliding about the corner of the house.

Varney had reached the automobile before he realized that something had gone wrong with his calculations. He leaped into the car, snapped his fingers in the faces of the sleepers.

They rubbed their eyes, and sat upright, regarding him uneasily.

"Something is the matter with Brother Zela!" exclaimed Varney. "Come, we must get him and the girl!"

The five now skulked cautiously over the path which Varney had taken before. As they reached the summer house, he slipped into the shadow, stumbling over an unconscious form. They drew it out to the moonlight

He pulled back the black silk handkerchief which covered the features, to behold the bleeding, battered face of the leader of ceremonies.

The man returned to his senses, too weak for even a whisper.

"Quick, carry him to the car!" commanded Varney.

The four obeyed, returning through the shrubbery.

Payson Alden had tried vainly to arouse someone at the rear door of the house. He lifted Myra once more and now rushed to the front veranda, although he realized that this was a position exposed to the view of anyone on the thoroughfare.

"She is hypnotized," he muttered. "How on earth did she get downstairs this way, I wonder?"

His efforts to awaken the girl were no more successful than his attempt to waken someone with in the house. He did not know that even the front door bell had been "doctored" by the cautious Varney.

He began to pound on the door with the butt of his revolver.

Just then the big black automobile swung into view along the street.

Several figures sprang to the ground and started up the drive toward him.

Aiden banged still more lustily upon the door.

"Can they all be drugged?" he wondered hopelessly.

Then realizing that he was about to be surrounded, he tenderly laid the unconscious girl in the shelter of the brick portico support, and advanced toward the approaching figures.

He drew his revolver and sent a half dozen shots at them in rapid succession.

The men retreated, on the run. They sprang into the car, and replying with a volley from their own weapons, disappeared from view, as the car picked up speed.

Alden turned in disgust. Mrs. Maynard, in a dressing gown, had timidly opened the doorway, flanked by Willis.

"Quick—take Myra into the house!" cried the physician.

The girl had been awakened from her unnatural slumber by the fusillade of shots. She screamed, and Mrs. Maynard began to sob hysterically.

Alden turned and ran down the driveway, leaving the three behind in utter confusion.

But it was of no avail!

The chambers of his weapon were empty, and the machine had disappeared down the street; he returned angrily chiding himself at his carelessness in letting them escape.

As he mounted the veranda steps Mrs. Maynard found her tongue.

"Why, Doctor Alden! What do you mean by this outrageous conduct? What is Myra doing out of the house—and in her night dress? Explain it."

Alden shook his head helplessly.

"I can't! I don't know what it is all about, What did you do, Miss Myra?"

The girl could explain nothing. Mrs. Maynard's indignation increased, but Myra hushed her impetuously.

"Mother—mother!" she cried. "Look at Dr. Alden's hand!"

The physician glanced down at his left hand and for the first time realized that it was bleeding profusely.

He straightened the fingers, although with pain.

"It is nothing but a flesh wound," he said stoically.

But Myra caught it, and drew him into the doorway.

"Poor hand! You must come right in and have it dressed—poor hand!" she crooned.

And the pain, the run, the danger, were all repaid a thousand times by the tone of her voice, and the gentle caress of her soft fingers.

(To Be Continued Next Sunday.)

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CHAPTER XLIX.

The Elementary Spirit.

ON this morning, so fair and restful a day, Dr. Payson Alden and Myra Maynard rode out to the cemetery to leave a flower tribute on the grave of the self-sacrificing Hindoo.

The ungrassed earth of the pathetic mound was marked with a simple stone:

"In memory of
HAJI DHINN
Died
December 21, 1915.
Age 27."

Myra's face was wet with tears as she looked at this humble final resting place o fthe man who had given his all to save her life and that of the physician. And Alden wiped away a suspicious moisture from his eyes, as he turned away silently.

"Poor Haji! 'Greater love than this hath no man, that he gives his life for his friend.' I wonder if the sacrifice has been really worth it all. These implacable scoundrels are still so active, that I am almost beginning to despair," observed the physician.

"You must not do that," objected Myra, forcing a smile, as they walked back to the waiting automobile, "for I am sure that they are at their wits' end. I feel so relieved now, after these terrible days. Let us forget them for a few more hours at least."

Alden sighed and agreed. But the "forgetting" was decidely one-sided!

For in a small, crudely dug craven not many miles away, the clan of the Devil Worshippers were assiduously pursuing a new line of activity.

The members hardly understood the nature of their tasks, as they followed the bidding of the High Master. But that gentleman semed sure of his results, and his evil face was wreathed in sinister smiles of confidence as he watched through a tiny peep-hole of the room while his confederates went about their curious tasks.

In the center of the cavern was a huge stone chimney, with a large, open fireplace, such as may be seen in a number of New England farmhouses, but in this case the freshness of the mortar which interstieed the crude granite rocks gave evidence that the structure was of recent erection. The black-garbed brethren were now bringing in great faggots of dry wood, mumbling a strange, and unintelligible incantation over each fragment of wood, as they deposited the fuel upon the andirons of curious appearance.

These andirons were of curious appearance; at the end of each was the grewsome figure of an imp, while all about the dank compartment were painted upon the walls and floors diabolical figures and skulls. Before this huge fireplace was set a square, black altar decorated with odd heiroglyphics, while in tis center was a brass incense pot.

Even as the men worked, a signal came to the ears of the leader of ceremonies, who walked silently to the heavily barred door. Some mysterious knocks from without, a few whispered passwords, presaged the appearance of Arthur Varney, breathless and excited.

"I must see the High Master at once," he exclaimed, starting toward the inner chamber.

"Yes, brother. But first you must don the robes of the Black Order," answered the leader. "I will announce you."

He disappeared, as the club man drew the dark mantle and hood about his shoulders and face.

The other members anxiously inquired of him the news, but Varney shook his head. He knew the penalty for garrulity, and disobedience; in this strange fellowship all news must first go to the supreme pontiff. The crashing of the Master's gong apprised him that he might enter. And, so, with low obeisance he sidled into the inner chamber, to be greeted with the customary sign of the sinful craft—upturned thumbs and clenched fists, pressed against the seared face of the potentate. Varney bowed three times, on bended knees, returning ths symbol of the Horned One.

"Why am I disturbed in my meditations, Varney?" rasped the High Master, in his grating voice.

"Master, I have just learned from Myra Maynard that this rascal, Payson Alden, is planning a new attempt against us."

Varney's voice trembled with apprehension.

"And what is his wild scheme now," laughed the confident Master. "He has failed so far!"

"Yes, Master, but Myra told me that he is sure of the new course—it is to call back the spirit of Haji, the Hindoo, in order to destroy our society!"

The Master snarled, then laughed.

"I wonder what the fool's plan is? However, let them call the spirit of the traitor, for nothing could suit my plans better!"

"What more shall I do, O Master?" asked Varney.

"Go with the other brethren, to make the required number for our ceremonial, thirteen. Obey the commands of the leader, and we will soon succeed," was the order, as the light faded out, and the face of the demoniac ruler disappeared from his view.

Varney joined his fellows in the outer cavern, to find them sitting cross-legged upon the floor, bowing to right and left, as they muttered their strange mantra:

"Omi padri hum!"

Over and over they repeated this weird phrase, as the leader held his arms before the now blazing fireplace in an odd rhythm.

For many minutes this curious ritual was pursued, with no apparent result. Suddenly, however, Varney was horrified to behold the spectral shadows of hands appearing above the glowing embers in the grate.

They seemed to clutch appealingly at some unseen object in the rolling smoke above.

The next surprise, to Varney as well as the other members, was the appearance in the room of the master himself, who seldom mingled with them. He knew that now must be some tremendous effort of the occult, and the weird actions of the fiendish leader proved his surmise to be true.

The master prostrated himself before the fireplace, muttering unfamiliar chants in a veritable paroxysm of tense exhortation.

The cries of the celebrants of this evil ceremony, at the command of the leader, now increased in volume until they were hoarse screams. It was a revolting, unnatural scene, and Varney, despite his subservience to his master, being more in touch with the outer, normal world than the other strange brethren, shuddered with a thrill of uncontrollable horror. His iron nerves were beginning to give way to the strain when a new apparition sent a thrill to the roots of his hair.

As he watched the fireplace, the hands fluttered once more, and a presence began to materialize within the searing tongues of flame!

At first it was indistinct, hardly more definite than the twining serpents of the fire.

Then a red glow, above the fire and intermingled with the smoke, became noticeable. A head, with eyes suggesting black coals, came into view, and later arms, a wiry torso, and gnarled legs became observable to the exhorters.

The master rose now, and waved his arms above his head.

"Oh, Elemental of the Fire, I greet thee!"

The spirit of the grate returned the high arm signal, swinging back and forth in its position over the flames like some huge imprisoned ape.

Its head, arms, and legs were in constant motion, like the licking flames which played about it. It advanced into the room, and with its bobbing head and shifting eyes, stared about at the place with a curious, half-animal, half-spiritual manner.

The only one in the room who did not cower back in fright as this specter joined the group was the high master.

The head of the strange spirit seemed blazing with flames, and the red glow which surrounded it caused the eyes of the members to smart as though from dense smoke.

"What wishest thou?" came from the elemental's lips, in tones which suggested the crackling, hissing noise of a great conflagration.

The master regarded it stolidly for an instant and then replied with his cunning smile:

"I wish a service, Oh, spirit of the deadly flames. And, for this service, I will reward thee well!"

"What is the reward?" came the prompt response, with a greedy eagerness. "What do I obtain?"

The high master leaned forward, and almost whispered the response.

"A blood sacrifice—the greatest reward which an elemental can obtain!" he snarled ingratiatingly. A blood sacrifice, even as part of the service itself. Is it sufficient?"

The elemental spirit looked about.

"One of these here assembled?" it asked, and the members trembled with apprehension.

The master laughed and looked at the cringing figures.

"No," and he shook his head. "Not one of these yet—perhaps one of these if there should be more treachery: that we will know anon. But now I want the blood of a girl. I will send thee to her if my price is sufficient."

"Let me have the sacrifice now!"

"Not until the service is accomplished will I pay thee!" was the tart reply.

The spirit hesitated and then agreed.

"I shall do as thou wishest!" it hissed. "Who is the girl?"

"Myra Maynard! Thou mayst find her through the ether, and I will let thee work out my will in thy own manner. Begone, upon the mission!"

The spirit returned to the fireplace, vanishing with a leer on the distorted semblance of features.

"Now, Varney, go to find out what Dr. Payson Alden may be doing," directed the master, before he disappeared within the secret room inside. Varney bowed, made the customary thumbs-up sign, and in a few minutes had emerged from the secret entrance to the council rooms, walking along the street, and pinching himself to see if he were awake, after this horrible apparition.

CHAPTER L.

The Ghost of Haji.

IN Dr. Payson Alden's laboratory, Myra and her mother were chatting with a young woman whom the physician introduced to them as a well-known spiritualist medium. She was a plump, amiable woman, and it seemed hard to believe that she possessed such mysterious powers.

The physician had just completed tacking up the black portieres in the corner of the room which constituted a "cabinet." It was a simple arrangement, stretched across the diagonal end of the room, of which the canopy formed one side of the triangle, with the two solid brick walls making the other two.

"Now, I have prepared this slate," explained the doctor. "I have placed a slate pencil within, and have tied it together securely, sealing it with wax and using my own seal ring on it, Mrs. Maynard. I know that you have heard of slate writing, but never believed it. You saw that the slate was blank, and it was one that you bought and brought for me yourself. Shall we go on with the seance?"

Mrs. Maynard, with an incredulous smile, nodded.

"Yes, doctor. You know I had forbidden Myra to ever try any more of this work, but I have heard so much of this spiritualistic nonsense, that I decided that seeing would be believing—or proving fraudulent," she replied.

Myra said nothing, now studying the face of the medium with quiet interest.

Alden produced a pair of handcuffs, which he placed upon the medium's wrists.

"Why these?" inquired Myra's mother.

"Because I believe in making sure that there can be no tampering with our slate, nor with any possible instruments. The best mediums in the world have been known to play tricks occasionally. Sometimes they are tired, and sometimes while under the influence of a spirit, they do droll, foolish things. In this case we will be sure in advance."

He turned to the medium, who had smiled at his words, and was seating herself in a comfortable, sloping armchair.

"Now, madame, are you prepared?" he inquired, as he walked toward the window to draw down the shade.

"Yes, although I am very nervous and am afraid that I am not as calm as I should be for a good demonstration. May I se the photograph of your Hindoo friend once again, in order that I may be impressed with the memory?"

Alden nodded and produced the photograph of the unfortunate Haji.

The woman gazed long and earnestly, at the pleasant features of the intellectual Oriental.

"I can see that he was indeed a psychic; such deep, clear eyes, and such a sensitive mouth. If any one can come back from the other world it will be he, for his spirit must be unusually active, even now," she remarked, as she closed her eyes and sank back into the chair.

There was an interruption, however, which caused her to sit bolt upright, in nervous irritation. It was the tapping of the maid upon the door.

Alden, who was just placing the tied slate upon a small table within the black cabinet, turned about angrily.

"Confound it, I gave orders not to be disturbed," he said, opening the portal. "What is it, Mary? Why do you interrupt my work this way?"

"Please, sir, there's a gentleman downstairs who said that he was invited here by Mrs. Maynard, to see you do some experimenting," was the timid response.

Alden whirled about to Myra's mother.

"Who was that?" he demanded, almost rudely. "I told you this was to be absolutely a secret task!"

Mrs. Maynard answered with a show of wounded feelings:

"Why, Dr. Alden, it's just Myra's fiance, Mr. Varney. He has shown such interest in your work, and he has been such a scoffer at it, that I was sure you would be pleased to give him a demonstration. Surely, we should have no secrets from a future member of the family!"

The physician scowled, and Myra stammered in embarrassment.

"Poor, dear mama! You do certainly upset more plans by your attempts to be hospitable. There is no reason in the world why Arthur should be intruding here, and you have probably disturbed the medium completely."

Alden bit his lip, and then smiled curiously.

"Well, inasmuch as it is your invitation, Mrs. Maynard, I cannot be unsociable. It might not be a bad thing to have this gentleman with us when we do get into communication with the unseen. Send him up, Mary!"

In a few minutes they were all settled again, in quietude, although the medium had declared that she was more nervous than ever.

It would have been evident, had the room been lighter, that Varney was far from mentally comfortable, as he sat there waiting for the demonstrotioon of the spirit. However, he concealed his disquietude from the others.

The medium strained and twisted in her chair as she seemed involved in some internal, mental struggle. Her mouth was quivering as though she were trying to speak and yet could find no words. This effort was maintained for many minutes. Finally Mrs. Maynard politely stifled a yawn; Varney laughed in his irritating way.

"I think the ghost is not walking tonight," he said.

"Shut up or get out!" snapped Alden rudely. The other man glared, but there was no reply to the authoritative tone. The medium was by this time in a cataleptic condition, her arms and lower limbs stiffened out as though she had been frozen. Alden stepped near her, and felt her pulse; it registered the barest suggestion of a flutter.

"Listen!" whispered Myra tensely.

From the direction of the cabinet they could discern a curious scratching sound.

"It is the slate pencil!" whispered Alden.

The noise continued at regular intervals, and then suddenly stopped with what seemed to be a click against the side of the slate. The doctor stepped toward the swinging curtains, but Myra stopped him.

"Look!" she said.

The curtains were bulging out, as though some tremendous fan were blowing behind them.

"It is the cold spirit breeze!" answered Alden, stepping away. "The presence is there! That is nothing but solid walls behind it and no possibility of any wind."

Varney was petrified with horror. The others were too intent in observing the strange manifestation to notice the nervous twitching of his fingers. He would have paid a fabulous sum to be able to fly from the room, but by sheer determination he forced himself to wait in silence for whatever might happen.

The Master was not in the habit of confiding in his confederates and so Varney was ignorant of what manifestation might take place from the queer elemental spirit which had been conjured from the glowing coals. But of one thing he was certain—a false move on his part would betray him to the shrewd and suspicious Alden, destroying the careful planning of months!

The curtain still puffed and sagged, in the fitful gusts of the mysterious breeze.

"Oooh!" exclaimed Mrs. Maynard, barely above a whisper, "I'm freezing. I want to get out of this room."

"Wait!" commanded the physician.

Now the curtains were agitated as though someone were walking about behind them.

Mrs. Maynard screamed, and Varney sprang to his feet.

The medium was groaning in an agony of mental perturbation, while Alden regarded the cabinet almost impatiently.

"Haji!" he murmured, "Haji, my brother! Will you not come to our aid? We need you, Haji!"

Again the curtains rustled and bellied in the uncanny wind, but there was no reply.

"Haji!"—and Alden's voice rose to a vibrant cry, "I summon you, my friend, to help those whom you alone can help!"

The curtains parted and a grayish apparition became evident, advancing toward them. Mrs. Maynard excitedly threw her arms about Myra's shoulders and buried her face, as she sobbed.

Varney backed away from the figure, into the corner of the room.

The figure, more distinct now, advanced toward the physician, who did not flinch.

It placed one hand upon the table and with the other pointed a dim finger at the eager physician. Now the features could be plainly seen; it was the familiar countenance of the murdered Oriental.

"Haji! Have you no message for me?" demanded Alden lowly.

The lips moved, but the voice came from the mouth of the silent medium, who lay with closed eyes and stiff fingers, in the chair.

It was Haji's voice, borne through the vocal chords of the medium!

"The Black Order is disbanded. The Master is dead. No more danger. Good-bye!"

Alden was dumfounded, as the figure began to fade from view, and Mrs. Maynard continued her hysterical sobbing.

Varney had breathed a sigh of relief, and now his face showed the suggestion of a quizzical smile.

"Well, that's god news, isn't it!" he exclaimed. "You're wonderful, doctor!"

There was a tone of exultation in his voice, but the physician was too engrossed in his own thoughts to notice it.

"I don't understand it!" he said slowly. "Did you see how his eyes twitched and he kept moving his arms from side to side. That is very queer! It isn't like Haji, and yet it was undoubtedly clear."

"Oh, I am so relieved!" exclaimed Mrs. Maynard, "But let me out of heer, doctor, for I cannot stand it another moment."

She had thrown her arms about Myra, in joyous relief. Despite the strain, the girl was happy in the knowledge which the message had brought.

"Oh, it is such good news. We need not worry now," she said, as she kissed her mother ecstatically.

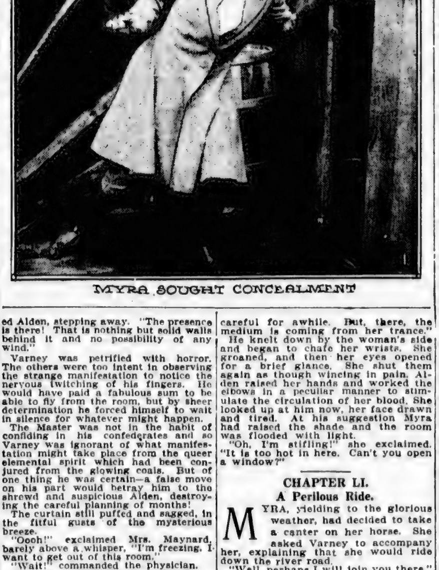
But Alden shook his head dubiously.

"Remember messages are not always reliable. You had better be very careful for awhile. But, there, the medium is coming from her trance."

He knelt down by the woman's side and began to chafe her wrists. She groaned, and then her eyes opened for a brief glance. She shut them again as though wincing in pain. Alden raised her hands and worked the elbows in a peculiar manner to stimulate the circulation of her blood. She looked up at him now, her face drawn and tired. At his suggestion Myra had raised the shade and the room was flooded with light.

"Oh, I'm stifling!" she exclaimed. "It is too hot in here. Can't you open a window?"

THE HANDCUFFS DISPLEASED THEM - NOT AT ALL'



MYRA SOUGHT CONCEALMENT

CHAPTER LI.

A Perilous Ride.

MYRA, yielding to the glorious weather, had decided to take a canter on her horse. She asked Varney to accompany her, explaining that she would ride down the river road.

"Well, perhaps I will join you there," he said. "But I must get downtown to the stable to get my horse. Take it easy and I'll try to be up in about three quarters of an hour.

So saying, he left, and within five minutes was talking over the private telephone wire to the master.

"The apparition gave the message which you wished," he reported. "And now Myra is riding on horseback along the shore road. Yes, she is alone, and will be there for nearly an hour."

The Master hung up the transmitter and issued some rapid orders, which resulted in a hurried ride for several members of the Black Lodge. The automobile which they used was left in a lonely stretch of woods about a mile above the river road.

The men, garbed in street clothes, carried guns and they lost no time in descending the steep delivity to the winding highway by the edge of the stream.

Here they waited in ambush for many minutes—minutes during which Payson Alden had been very busy in his laboratory.

For, upon returning to the room he found the medium still weak from her exertions. He gave her a little tonic, and as she started to leave the room, suddenly remembered the scratching sound which had come from the bound slate.

"Great Scott! I've been stupid. That message was so queer that it put me off. Let us see what was written," he exclaimed, turning toward the little table.

They opened it, cutting the sealed cords and saw a startling demonstration of the Unknown Force.

For there, in the unmistakable handwriting of the Hindoo were these words:

"Not me—not me. A fire elemental has occupied my astral shell. Warn Myra. Haji."

The doctor turned dismayed toward the medium.

"Heavens! We must act at once.

The medium pointed to the spot on the table where the specter had rested its hand. The varnish was blistered, as though by a hot iron.

The print of the fingers was indelibly placed there. On the floor were several footprints, burned into the wood. Even now there was the faint odor of scorched varnish.

"Not a minute to lose, for a fire elemental can actually set fire to material things!" The physician rang for a messenger, and then bade farewell to the distraught medium.

"Have no fear," he told her, "for I know the antidote for these strange spirits. We will soon have it under control."

The messenger boy arrived, lagging, as usual with his class, but Alden gave him a bill for unusual activity, as he handed out an envelope. He gave the lad a heavy gallon jug of stoneware, and shoved his shoulder impatiently.

"Run along, now, with this note, and you'll get another dollar if you are back here in ten minutes."

"Where's it to?" asked the boy, squinting at the address. "Oh, the manager of Schmidt's slaughter house. All right, guv'nor, I'll be on the jump."

And he made good his word, returning with the vessel filled with fresh blood from the slaughtered beeves.

"Gee, that's a bum cargo," said the youth with a shudder, as he pocketed his second payment. "But I reckon youse doctors has to buy all sorts of stuff, don't youse?"

Alden nodded and dismissed him with a faint smile. Then he hurried to an apparatus in one corner of the laboratory. This consisted of a broad, flat bowl, upon a tripod. Above it hung suspended a huge coil of electric tubing, about two feet across the axis. Alden tested it for an instant, turning on the current with a small switch on the wall. The ultra-violet rays flooded the room, making his eyes smart at the sudden illumination. He was satisfied and turned it off.

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On the shore road Myra was cantering along slowly, enjoying the warm spring breezes, as she wondered over Arthur Varney's delay.

She did not observe three ominous figures concealed behind the ledge of the steep bank, but she was watched with the shrewd intensity of wild beasts about to spring upon their prey.

"Now, shoot!" commanded one of the men.

Down the hillside they plunged after her.

Unwitting of the pursuit, Myra nimbly slid down from the saddle to pick some flowers which were growing in the thick verdure between the rocks. She left her horse standing, and was astonished to see, when she had reached the blossoms, that a man in a black suit had mounted the animal, riding away with it quickly.

"Stop!" she cried, and clambered down, forgetting the flowers in her alarm.

But the rider paid no heed, and was soon out of view. She was close to the riverside by this time, while behind her was the precipitous bank. The girl turned to summon help, just as the report of a rifle rang out from the high ledge above her.

A bullet struck a branch close by her head, and she involuntarily screamed.

Too late she realized the force of Payson Alden's caution.

She fled down the road in the opposite direction from that in which her horse had been ridden, toward an old barge, moored to the bank.

Two more shots followed her, but she had made another turn in the road and was temporarily out of view from the marksmen.

"Oh, where shall I go?" she exclaimed desperately.

She saw that she was leaving unmistakable footprints, in the sandy shore, and paused. If she clambered upon the barge, to hide, her trail would be evident. She saw, further down the stream an old tree, fallen so that it stretched down past the water's edge.

Here was an idea. She ran toward the high bank, purposely digging her shoes into the sand so as to leave a distinct trail on her way past the barge!

Then she clambered up into the shrubbery along the rocky ground until she had reached the broad, uptorn roots of the old tree. Out this she ran, trembling with fear, yet spurred on by the determination to outwit the pursuing scoundrels.

Behind her the members of the Black Order were speeding through the trees to get in sight of her.

But fortunately the girl managed to drop into the water, where she could wade up to the old barge without the telltale footprints before they came into view.

With her virile young arms, strengthened by desperation, Myra drew herself up a long rope which hung over the side of the deserted vessel.

And with a sigh of relief she darted through the hatch into the shade of the deck. Even as she did so, her persecutors rounded the curve of the bank, and looked in vain for her.

One of the men pointed to the footprints, made by the small shoes. They dashed on, with bloodthirsty cries which reached her timid girl within her retreat.

But her strategy had outwitted them, for they passed, following the trail on up the hill and into the long stretch of woods, to vainly beat the bushes for her.

And then a strange thing happened.

For as Myra rested from her plunge and exertion she saw through the doorway an uncanny figure. It was that of the Hindoo, whose apparition she had observed in Alden's laboratory. The figure rushed toward her, leering with triumph. The girl sprang to her feet, running, stumbling, over the debris of old boxes, broken boards and the like, with which the interior of the barge was littered, toward a room far back in the hall. She could barely discern a doorway, and she sprang into this just as the specter was upon her. She slammed the door shut, and held the knob, frozen with terror.

On the other side of the partition the fire elemental was chuckling in ghoulish semblance of mirth, touching this barrel and that box with its fingers. As it did so the sparks began to glow, and the curling smoke to twine through the partition to frighten the horrified girl still more.

The flames grew and she became weaker and weaker as she stood by the doorway, trying to keep the monster away from her.

Suddenly the specter disappeared, and the flames seemed to die down, but Myra had lost consciousness!

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Back in Payson Alden's psychological laboratory the doctor was performing a strange experiment, having refreshed his memory of its methods from the pages of a musty old French volume.

"I may be crazy," he muttered, "to believe some of this. But they say it has been done—that elementhals are vampires and are blood hungry. Then this ought to work."

He poured out the gory contents of the jug into the shallow bowl.

As he did so he cried out: "Elemental spirit of fire, come! I offer a blood sacrifice!"

And even as he spoke the spirit materialized.

It still retained the astral form of Haji, his friend, but as the blood began to disappear, as though sucked up by an unseen sponge, the physician lowered the rope sustaining the electric coil. He pressed the lever, and the biting rays of the ultra-violet force glowed forth.

The figure within writhed and shrieked, and suddenly changed in form; all like of Haji disappeared.

"Will you let Myra Maynard alone if I liberate you?"

"Yesss!" came the sibilant tones of the elemental, writhing in torture.

"Remember, if you break faith I can summon you again!" commanded the physician. "Go when I turn out the lights."

"Yesss!" was hissed again. He dropped the lever and the light disappeared. So faded the vision a swell, and Alden ran to the telephone.

"Now I know what may be expected," he exclaimed.

A quick message to her home informed him that Myra had gone riding on the shore road. Another call to fire headquarters informed that the only fire in that upper district was a burning barge, which was of little value.

"Get to it at once. There is a girl there!" cried the physician.

But he did not wait for reply. Instead he raced downstairs, hailed a taxicab fortunately enpassant and within a few minutes, which seememd eternity long, he was wading into the water, even as the engine reached the scene. He dashed into the hatchway and leaping over the smouldering litter, forced his way with shrewd instinct through the burning barge until he found the other door.

Another moment and he was out on deck again, to face the surprised firemen with the unconscious Myra in his arms!

As she opened her eyes she gave him a smile of ineffable gratitude—and that smile, and the thought back of the clear blue depths was ample reward for the singed clothes and blisters, which he now realized he had acquired!

(Continued Next Sunday.)

See this episode TODAY at Hippodrome, 9th and N. Y. ave.

GOLD TEETH CALLED PASSPORT TO HEAVEN

Jats, East Indian Troops, Believe Fillings Will Keep Wearer From Telling Lies.

LONDON, June 8 (by mail).—Wear gold in your teeth and have a passport for heaven.

This is an Indian legend. It comes from the River Tigris, in Mesopotamia, where British and Indian troops are fighting the Turks.

Many of the Indian Sepoys, fighting in Mesopotamia are "Jats," a people of Northwest India. "Jats" wear gold in their teeth if they can possibly afford it.

How a newspaper correspondent drew the legend from one of the Indian soldiers is told in a dispatch direct from the Tigris.

Tara, a "Jat" of five years' service in the Indian army, was called into the commanding officer's tent to explain why "Jats" wear gold in their teeth. The Sahib wants to know, the officer explanied to Tara.

For Appearance's Sake.

"For the sake of appearance, Sahib," responded Tara. "To give them an air."

"Is there no other reason?"

Tara pondered a moment and slowly spoke:

"There is a saying among my people, Sahib, that he who years gold in his teeth must always speak what is true. Gold in the teeth stops the passage of lies."

"But you have no gold in your teeth?"

"No, Sahib."

"Is that why you tell the tall story about all these Germans you killed at Festubert?"

"No, Sihib," Tara smiled, "it is true that I killed ten between two traverses."

"I heard the story about gold helping a 'Jat' to heaven," observed the commander.

A gleam of reminiscence sprang into the eyes of the Sepoy. Then he delivered himself of the legend.

Passport to Other World.

"Gold," he explained, "is a passport to the other world as in this. It is not safe to carry it on the finger or in the ear, where it might be detached, so it is worn in the teeth."

Thus the legend came out for the remainder of the world to ponder over.

The "Jat" is the best type of Indian fighter. He was primarily a farmer, but conditions made him a fighting man.

It takes more than a common enemy to take a position away from a regiment of "Jats." They fight to the death.

"Jat" regiments fought in France as early as November, 1914. They arrived at a critical moment and were thrown into the teeth of the fighting. The enemy was halted wherever the "Jats" were concerned.

SENT TO WORKHOUSE FOR BRADDOCK RIOT

Socialist Editor Gets Threee Years and Associates Lighter Terms.

PITTSBURGH, Pa., July 2.—Frederick H. Merrick, Socialist orator and editor, recently found guilty of inciting to riot in connection with the fatal Braddock outbreak of May 2, was sentenced to serve three years and six months in the workhouse. Judge Ambrose Reid and T. J. Prather pronounced sentence.

John Hall, Rudolph Blum, and others convicted with Merrick, received lighter sentences. Seven of the fourteen found guilty were paroled. Anna Goldberg, the only woman convicted, was sent to jail for one year.

Stolen Cattle Ordered Returned to Americans

EAGLE PASS, Tex., July 2.—Governor Mireles, of the state of Coahuila, through Mayor Schmidt, of this city, signed a manifesto ordering the return of 100,000 cattle recently seized from American owners just south of the border.

It is reported that Carranza soldiers already are rounding up the stolen stock.

TODAY'S BEAUTY TALK

You can make a delightful shampoo With very little effort and for a very trifling cost, if you get from your druggist a package of canthrox and dissolve a teaspoonful in a cup of hot water. Your shampoo is now ready. Just pour a little at a time on the scalp and rub briskly. This creates an abundance of thick, white lather that thoroughly dissolves and removes the dandruff, excess oil and dirt. After rinsing, the hair dries quickly, with a fluffiness that makes it seem heavier than it is, and takes on a rich luster and a softness that makes arranging it a pleasure.—Advt.

DON'T USE COCOANUT OIL ON YOUR HAIR

Or Anything That Must Be Washed Off.

The scalp is not like other skin on the body that can be thoroughly cleansed with soap and water. The scalp contains a hair germ that must be treated with respect.

All soaps and everything that foams contains alkali, and alkali dries up the scalp. Don't use them. Dandruff comes from too dry a scalp. The most sensible way to treat your hair is to thoroughly brush it once a day to keep it clean. Then use Speiser's Scalp Tonic after brushing to give your scalp that life and health which produce glossy hair. Speiser's Scalp Tonic corrects any abnormal condition of the scalp, kills dandruff, and relieves itchy and irritated skins. But even Speiser's Scalp Tonic cannot do the best work against the persistent use of soaps, perfumed oils, cocoanut oil, and patented concoctions that must be washed out of the hair to make your head presentable in public. Speiser's Scalp Tonic is for sale only at O'Donnell's Drug Store, at 50 cents, and is absolutely guaranteed by them in every respect.
—Advt.

Modern Chiropody
Affords instant and satisfying foot comfort. Once you know the value of our service you will never again tolerate painful feet.
Consult
GEORGES & SON, Inc.
CHIROPODISTS,
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Roleo, Va. (south end of Highway Bridge).
Free automobile from 9th and D sts. nw.

The Mysteries of Myra An Inspiring Novel and Motion Picture Drama

Written by Hereward Carrington.

Dramatized by Charles W. Goddard.

CHAPTER LII.
The Elixir of Youth.

WITHIN the council chamber of the Black Order stood two figures, unfamiliar to Arthur Varney and his associates. Yet they had both gained admittance by presenting the secret word and signs. A suprising willingness of the High Master to interview them, after his receipt of a note, permitted their access. One was an aged woman, the other a man of equal years, apparently. Despite their decrepit physical condition, they were richly attired. Indeed, there was an uncanny air surrounding them which caused Varney, used as he was to horrors of the psychic, to shudder in spite of himself.

"This is the first time the High Master has ever admitted a woman to our sacred council, brother," he whispered to the leader of ceremonies.

"That is no mere woman," replied the other, with a cautionary gesture. "Do not speak so loud. She and the other are two evil spirits the Master has summoned to help him in our cause!"

The old creatures shot venomous glances at Varney, who instinctively drew back.

The crash of the brazen gong struck thrice, by the clawlike hand of the Master, announced that the visitors were to be ushered into the inner room.

The black brotherhood, at a signal from the leader of ceremonies, bowed low in obedience, on either side, forming a double row through which the newcomers were led to the swinging velvet curtains.

Here they hesitated, looking suspiciously at each other for an instant's pause. Then, seemingly reassured, by their common thought, they hurried within the portal, behind the hooded leader. Varney, rubbing his forehead meditatively, turned toward the secret exit from the council room. At a whispered word, another brother opened it for him and he left the evil place.

A few minutes later he was walking along the open roadway, in the glorious sunlight of another fair Spring day.

There was an unusual look of indecision on his usually calm features. It was not the self-confident Varney, now, but one who seemed the victim of an uneasy stirring of spirit. He mopped his forehead nervously with a perfumed silk handkerchief, and looked miserably at the ground.

As he strolled on he bumped into more than one pedestrian completely engrossed in his thoughts, to the exclusion of all mundane affairs.

"I can stand it no longer," murmured he. "Myra has been so brave, and her faith has been so strong in me. I know she does not love me, but I am not a monster. I am human and her trust has been so misplaced."

He sighed, and his eyes caught sight of something on the ground. It was a fallen rose, from some careless person's bouquet.

He stopped to pick up the crushed petals. "Poor little flower. You are like Myra Maynard. You have been trampled on in the great highway, and yet, crushed as you are, you still retain your fragrance. I must confess and make a clean breast of it all. Maybe she will care for me the more because I am honest at last with her. That is the truest test of love. And, I do love her. The promises of the master are beautiful, but I am not so sure as I was that he will keep them."

And then he looked guiltily about, even fearfully, as though he were afraid that his thoughts might be borne through walls and distance to the mysterious mind of the evil genius who seemed to know everything by that strange psychic power.

"I must think it over well, before I make the final pdunge," mused Arthur Varney, and he walked on into the more open country, fighting for the first time in years, against his evil desires, and re-enforced by that conscience whose still, small voice had been mute for so long.

Unknown to him, a silent watcher had been following him, far in the distance, and this man smiled evilly more than once. When Varney finally perched on a high group of rocks, overlooking the river, the "shadow" hurried into a telephone booth in a small road-house in the valley, to report his location.

"Very good" came the voice of the high master of the Black Order. "He will bear more watching. But go to him and tell him to visit the girl, where he will receive a new order from me, which he is to obey implicitly. Tell him to be waiting on the street, south of the Maynard manison, in about an hour."

"Yes, master. I will obey."

The man left the place and slowly sauntered up to the thoughtful Varney, who was disturbed visibly by this sudden reminder of the evil brotherhood.

"Oh!" he exclaimed, as the two exchanged the "thumbs up" sign of the order. "How did you know I was here?"

The other smiled with a leer, as he replied suavely.

"I did not know you were here. But the Supreme One did, and sent me with a message to you. He knows all things at all times."

And there was a tone of sinister threat in his voice, as he delivered the command. Varney looked at his watch and nodded.

"I will obey as I have always done," he replied. "But I am beginning to be discouraged, for I fear that we cannot succeed. There is too much white magic fighting our black art."

"Ah, brother, do not dare to tell the Master that you are losing faith. That is almost as bad as out and out treachery, for the strength of our occult force depends upon absolute confidence. We will win, for the greatest force in the world of matter and spirit is with us. Adieu! Fail not, brother."

They separated, with another exchange of symbolic movements of the hands and Varney walked slowly in the direction of Myra's home. His conflict of moods was still apparent, but force of habit caused him to obey.

Black in the unholy of unholies, as the elaborately inner room of the High Master could well be named, a strange scene was in progress.

The evil pontiff sat languidly upon a divan, leering down at the two eager faces before him.

Both the visitors, on their knees, were begging almost tearfully for his help.

"You give us the magic potion if you will, O Master! Will you not reward us for what we have already done?" begged the woman.

"Ah, I gave you what was your need. Have you not both wealth and power?"

The old man mumbled through his toothless gums.

Yea! But the greatest boon of life has been denied us, after all our fiendish servitude to you."

"Ay, we want YOUTH, without which power, wealth, and everything else is as naught," echoed the old woman, wobbling unsteadily upon her aged knees.

The Master laughed, with that crocodile smile of his which sent a tremor of apprehension through his two suppliants.

"And if I grant you this boon will you do what I demand, in bringing about the destruction of Myra Maynard and Dr. Payson Alden?"

Both nodded emphatically.

The Master arose from the divan and walked to an elaborately carved cabinet, on which demoniac figures, holding tridents and other implements of torture were intertwined.

The old man and woman followed his movements with greedy glances.

He drew from a drawer a small black lacquered jewel box, bringing this back to the divan.

Here he sat again, unlocking it with tantalizing deliberation, and drawing from it a smaller case.

The aged eyes glittered with a new fire as he finallydrew from the inner receptacle several small vials, filled with various substances of liquid and powder.

"See," and he tantalizingly, held up one.

"The Elixir of Vision!" he continued. "Would you like that?"

"No, we have seen the world for three hundreds of years," answered the man, raucously. "You know what we want."

The Master held up another vial.

"The Elixir of Taste!" he said. "And here, the Elixir of Hearing."

"Age needs them not," she said. "Drive away the burden of years and we will have all else which soul could desire."

The Master smiled again, as he replied: "Souls * * * You have no souls. Those are already bargained away. But here is the precious substance which you crave."

He held up the last of the bottles. It was labeled: "Elixir of Youth."

"Yes, yes!" and both of them crawled toward him screaming with delight.

"Will you obey me then? Will you bring about their destruction, if I give it to you?"

"Anything! We will obey you from now until doomsday!" cried the woman.

"Yes, that and more!" cried the old man. They seemed for all the world like drug fiends begging for the deadly stuff, after a period of enforced fasting.

"Very good—or better still, very bad, then," and the Masterarose. He poured a few drops into a little curved goblet and handed it to the old woman.

She drank it eagerly, and staggered, as though the liquid had burned her lips and mouth. She clutched at her bosom, and sank moaning into a chair held by the waiting leader of ceremonies. Her companion watched her anxiously, his skinny fingers closing and opening in a tremor of fear and uncertainty.

"She is dying!" he gasped.

"No, she is being born again!" answered the Master.

Even as he spoke an inscrutable change came into her being. Her eyes opened wider, her chin grew bigger, her shoulders broadened and straightened up from the former stoop of senility.

Her cheek bones took on a fuller curve, a pink glow came into the haggard skin.

Her companion stepped back with a glad wondering cry.

"It works! It works!" he exclaimed. "She has become young again. Oh, give me my share, Master, and we will be your willing slaves to serve your ends, with all our evil powers!"

The Master handed him the re-filled glass. And unbelievable as it seemed to the leader of ceremonies, so used to the strange machinations of the Master, within a few minutes, these two—who had tottered in as an elderly, year worn pair, now stood facing each other, with all the robust physical beauty of youth.

The woman appeared not more than twenty-one or two; she was an exquisitely fair creature, of a languorous and Oriental type of beauty.

The man, well knit, with straight handsome features, looked like some latter-day depiction of a Greek god!

"I have wrought my work well," commented the Master, sinking down into a meditative pose on the divan. "Give this note to Arthur Varney, whom you will find at the address where a brother will lead you. Then proceed with your task."

The man took the envelope and bowed, making the sign of the Devil Worshippers before he left the inner room.

"And you, with your beauty which I have restored, must win your cause with Dr. Payson Alden. He is only human, and you are fairer—and more devilish than Cleopatra."

The woman drew herself up haughtily, and laughed.

"I have forgotten none of the wiles of a thousand years you shall see!"

And so she retired, leaving the evil genius smiling and muttering to himself, with supreme satisfaction.

CHAPTER LIII.
The Poison of Jealousy.

Arthur Varney had finally conquered his own wicked nature. He was determined to make a clean breast of the whole conspiracy, throwing himself upon the generosity of Myra Maynard; knowing the spirit of the girl, he was certain that she would keep his confidence and not betray him to Dr. Alden. And if he acted quickly enough he might be able to save her from this new and incomprehensible danger, presaged by the visit of the two wicked-faced old strangers in the council room.

He had reached the street upon which the spacious Maynard estate was located. Walking down the thoroughfare he arrived at the long and carefully kept hedgerow which shut off the grounds from the highway.

On the other side of this he heard happy voices, and he peered through the interstices of the gren leaves.

There was Myra, in a light tennis costume, springing about the smooth rolled court with the lithe grace of a young antelope, as she swung her racquet with rare skill.

Varney's heart leaped at the sight, and then his heavy brows contracted in a frown. He could see the athletic shoulders and sun-burned arms of some man, facing away from the hedge.

"Curse him; it is that confounded Alden again!" he muttered, with a pang of jealousy stabbing all the good intentions.

As he peeped Myra stopped to tie her shoelace.

"Here, let me be your knight, fair lady!" laughed the physician, nimbly vaulting the net and kneeling with droll gallantry before the girl.

"Very good, Sir Galahad," answered Myra, as Varneys hand clenched angrily, from his vantage on the other side of the green screen. "Thank you very much. How shall I reward you?"

As Alden arose, he whispered something in the girl's ear, and she blushed prettily, with an alluring pout, she shook her head and turned back to serve the ball again.

"The confounded interloper," muttered Varney, turning on his heel and retracing his steps, with an additional flow of epithets which were ever less complimentary to his rival.

But Payson Alden and Myra continued to enjoy their sport, with unabated energy.

Varney had not gone far when he was met by two men.

One of them was a familiar brother from the Black Order, who, after a shifty survey for possible observers, exchanged the Devil Worshipper's symbol with him. The other was the rejuvenated envoy of the Master. Naturally Varney did not recognize him. But he did recognize the diabolical signature at the bottom of the note which the man handed him.

The message read:

"Varney obey this man without hesitation. THE MASTER."

The man then raised his hand with a peculiar gesture which brought an answering sign from Varney. The token was proof that although not a member of the Black Order the other was affiliated with an organization of which the club man knew much. He nodded, and put the note carefully into his pocket.

As he did so the woman companion of the mysterious messenger approached them.

"This lady is helping us," said the man. "Now here are the opera glasses which you are to use. Let us see the girl and the doctor. Where is a good place?"

"Cross the street," said Varney, "and look down that way, through the trees."

The man obeyed and nodded.

"Yes, I see them plainly. Here, you may look, so that you will make no mistake with him."

He handed them to the woman, who directed the glasses as he indicated.

"A very handsome fellow," she said coquettishly. "But I think he will yield to my charms, just the same."

Varney looked at her questioningly.

"Bring the girl to a spot where you can use the glasses on the front window of the doctor's house," directed the man. "And be there in just half an hour."

He muttered a few more directions which brought a new look of hope to Varney's face, and then he disappeared with the other brother of the Black Order and the woman.

Varney walked down the street, by a detour, so as to reach the front portico of the Maynard mansion without passing the tennis court.

"I will wait for Miss Myra," he told Willis, the butler, who admitted him.

"I'll call her, sir."

"No, don't interrupt the doctor's little game!"

MYRA SAT UPRIGHT IN BED ~

Willis smiled and shrugged his shoulders politely, as he left the visitor alone in the library.

Varney walked to the window and watched the close of the tennis game with increasing bitterness in his heart. He saw Myra look at her wrist watch and then gesture toward the house. Alden walked with her, as she turned toward the porch. Just as they passed the summer house he beckoned to her to step inside, and Varney almost tore down the curtains in his jealous rage.

As Myra laughingly ran out of the house, Alden stepped behind her and waved his hand.

"I could have sworn the scoundrel kissed her then!" exclaimed Varney, as he flung himself miserably into a chair.

He heard Myra's step on the hall floor as she called her last farewell to Alden.

"Well, if you won't come in and have tea, doctor, I'm sorry, for I'll have to drink it alone. But you are a bad boy.

This settled it. Varney sprang to his feet and regarded the surprised girl with blazing eyes.

"Why, Arthur! I didn't know you were here," was her abashed greeting. "Why didn't you come out and join our tennis game?"

Varney snapped his fingers. "That is a game for high school boys and silly girls, not for real men. But, Alden was playing a man's game in the summer house. He kissed you."

Myra flushed and stepped back before his vehement torrent of fury.

"Well—what if he did? Isn't it my business, Arthur Varney?" she demanded.

"No!" he cried. "Not as long as you are engaged to me. You are wearing my solitaire right now. And I won't stand for it."

Myra laughed with subdued anger herself.

"Then you can sit down. You can also think over your apology, for you have been very rude. I am going upstairs to change from my tennis suit, and when I come down Iwill tell you something—after I hear your apology. Otherwise I will never speak to you again. Goodbye."

Varney glared at her, but she turned on her heel and ran up the broad stairway.

He walked up and down the library, raging, but gradually his shrewder self came to his rescue. He paused and saw upon the carved table the crystalline globe with which Myra had more than once been able to use her developing psychic powers.

"I'll beat him with the very trick he taught her to do. The man should be there by this time. They said half an hour. She will learn a lesson indeed," he told himself.

Myra had returned to the library.

"I'm very sorry, my dear girl, but it's my great love for you which makes me mad with fury when I see that deceitful scoundrel playing with your affections—for I know that you are exceedingly fond of him, much as I hate to admit it."

Myra paused, and then answered indignantly:

"Well, that is a poor sort of apology. But, why do you say Dr. Alden is deceitful? He has proved to me that he is the soul of honor!"

"Well, I dare you to use your occult power to do crystal gazing and find out!" retorted Varney. "He has a reputation among club men of being a great flirt, and you, a young girl, are ready to believe any of his lies. Just try to see him in the crystal globe and believe for yourself."

Myra shook her head.

"Why, no that would be a sort of spying—eavesdropping, in a way. I wouldn't do it."

"We would know the truth then," insisted Varney. "Try it—he taught you the trick. You believe in him—why not put him to the test and find out. If there is nothing wrong you're no worse, and you've proven me to be mistaken. As your future husband, I have the right to protect you, and to advise you."

The girl hesitated and looked at the crystal in a fascinated way. Then she walked timidly toward it as though fearing to gaze into it, to learn a possibly unhappy secret.

"Sit down and study it!" insisted Varney, smiling.

Myra sank into a chair before the uncanny crystal and stared into it with an intent gaze.

Suddenly she screamed.

"What do you see?" demanded Varney, tensely, leaning over her shoulder to behold only the iridescent glass.

"It is Dr. Alden," the girl murmured, unsteadily. "And there is a woman—a black-haired woman, sitting by him—Oh! I can't believe it!"

She recoiled and averted her troubled blue eyes.

"Look again!" commanded Varney. "You may see something more interesting still."

Myra rose unsteadily and walked away with downcast glance.

"No, I can't believe it. I simply can't. Sometimes the crystals play queer tricks, he told me!"

"He told you! He has told you too much. I'll tell you that though—I was just getting my opera glasses from the optician where they were being mended. I have them here in my pocket. There is nothing psychic about opera glasses, and we can go down and look through his windows from a safe distance. Then you will believe what you see and not his lies!"

Myra turned upon him quickly.

"Why are you so sure?" she demanded. "I will not be a sneak."

"I am sure because I have heard ugly stories about him," urged Varney, "and I want to save you from a sneak."

Myra, almost against her will, yielded to his urging and they were soon walking down the street, not far from the physician's house.

"Now we can see down the hill here. There is his study or reception room window on that side of the house, as I remember it," coached the persistent Varney. "That is the room where your mother and I waited that day. Here, my dear girl, take the glasses and see what you see without my prompting you."

"I only came along to prove how wrong you were, Arthur," said Myra, and she now took the opera glasses with more assurance. As she did so, Arthur Varney looked at his watch and smiled. And just as she did so, within the doctor's waiting room was a woman visitor. The woman looked at the clock on the wall. She suddenly threw her arms about the doctor's neck and clung to him with strange fury, showering kisses upon her face and holding him close by the window as she did so.

Myra Maynard, from her distant viewpoint, gave a scream and dropped the glasses.

"Oh, Arthur, I hate you for having shown this," was her surprising remarks, as she burst into tears.

Varney caught her in his arms, impetuously, and the girl struggled. As he did so, she gave a final weak call for help and lost her senses.

CHAPTER LIV.
The Path to the Moon.

When Myra came to a realization of her surrounding she found herself being assisted by the mysterious stranger who had brought the note of command to Varney. The latter, hiding with the other Black Order member behind some evergreens on the side of the street, peered anxiously at the girl.

"Do you think he hypnotized her sufficiently?" asked Varney.

"Yes, she will obey," replied the other. "See, she thinks he's her benefactor. Ha, ha!"

And the man laughed quietly, as the other man assisted the girl to walk unsteadily along the street. Myra had rounded the curve in the road on her way home, escorted by the gallant stranger, before Dr. Alden's visitor had finally yielded to the commands of the physician's servant to leave his house.

Myra, at her gate, thanked her visitor for his courtesy, and entered the house. As she shook hands with him she had felt a strange thrill of apprehension; it was the same feeling which one might have experienced on touching the scaly body of some jungle serpent.

Gut the girl was completely unstrung. Her mother found her, flung unhappily upon her own bed and sobbing.

"What is the matter, child?" demanded Mrs. Maynard. "Dr. Alden is calling for you upon the telephone and I told him to hold the wire."

Myra looked up through her tears.

"Tell him I never want to see him or speak to him again," she responded to her mother's surprise. "He has proved unworthy."

And although the physician tried to reach her many times during the following hours the girl was adamantine in her determination.

"I certainly don't understand it," Payson Alden told himself, as he started to leave his house to walk over to the Maynard mansion late that evening. Just as he stepped across the rug in the vestibule he kicked some small object.

"What's this?" and he turned on the electric switch. He stoped to pick up a small wrist bag which he had noticed, as he now remembered, on the arm of the strange woman who had forced her kisses upon him during the afternoon.

"Well, that means that she is apt to come back and claim her property. She was a queer patient, and I believe is demented." He opened the bag and within it saw a roll of bills of large denomination. 'Now I'm certain she'll call again. Well, I don't want to see her. That's certain.

Alden examined the bag closely, and on one corner of it—scratched in the silver clasp—he beheld a tiny hieroglyphic which gave him a nervous start.

"Um!" he muttered. "Maybe there's a meaning to this that I haven't suspected. That woman kissed me before the window? Myra did not want to talk to me or see me again. I wonder if * *"

He walked to the window and looked through it to the sloping stretch of street as it ascended the hill. He whistled, and then lit a cigarette, to pace up and down his waiting room, lost in deep thought.

"There was something spooky about that woman. If she comes back I'll try a little test on her that Haji told me of. It's among the papers he bequeathed to me,' he mused. He hurried up stairs to his laboratory, opened his safe and drew out a number of rolled papers and parchments. Finally he found the one he searched for. He returned to the waiting room, after securing some tacks and a small hammer. Then, without turning up the light to betray his actions to any unwelcome observers, he tacked the scroll face upward upon the floor, chuckling to himself expectantly.

"The Sacred Pentagram of King Solomon has worked miracles in by-gone ages, so Haji says. I believe he spoke the truth, and we will try once more."

Satisfied with his task's completion he retired to the dining room to sit in the darkness.

He replaced the wrist-bag in the exact poistion in which he had found it. Now, he waited long and with growing impatience for developments, as he smoked cigarette after cigarette. A thousand strange vagaries flitted through his mind, and yet, so much had he personally delved into the psychic that a bit of the strange force seemed to be telling him a message of its own; that patience and concentration on his new purpose would bring success.

Suddenly, after an interminable delay, he heard a faint noise in the direction of his front door.

"I wonder——" and then he crept noiselessly to the partly opened doorway leading into the waiting room.

There was a little click and the front portal, mysteriously unlocked, swung back on its hinges. The figure of a woman with the rustling of a silken skirt and the strange aroma of some Oriental perfume, apprised him it was the long-expected visitant.

The intruder crept stealthily about the room to the big chair by the window, where she had thrown herself that afternoon with such impudent abandon.

As she stopped to pick up the bag Alden stepped into the room and threw on the electric switch.

The place was flooded with light and the woman spun about in amazement. Then she laughed insolently at the stern look of the doctor.

"Well?" she said, brazenly.

"What do you want here?" demanded Alden.

"I came for my property!" she retorted.

"I will call the police and have you arrested for burglary. Explain yourself!"

"No, you won't! You'll be embroiled, for I'll pull off my hat and tear my clothes and scream for help!" was the confident reply, as the beautiful woman sank smiling into the big chair. Alden was standing with his back to the wall. She did not notice that his fingers were pressing an electric bell again and again.

But upstairs in the servants' quarters that summons was heard. He had given instructions that he might need quick attention on this night, and even as the woman cast her black, alluring glances at him, he heard the footsteps of the excited servants on the dining room floor.

"No, I have my witnesses!" exclaimed the doctor. "And I am aware that you do not want to have any police here, either. There, John, grab her! And you Mary, block that doorway."

Alden ran for the front doorway and slammed it shut, turning the bolt quickly. The woman sprang up, and then laughed evilly.

"You are from the Black Order," snapped Alden.

"What if I am. You have lost Myra Maynard, by this time!" and she laughed coarsely, as she pointed to the hands of his big wall clock. "I have served my purpose and no human hand can stop me now!"

"Yes, indeed, four human hands can do it!" chied Alden. He advanced toward her, and at a signal John, his valet, followed his example. "There is the Sacred Pentagram of Solomon, on the floor. I believe you are an evil spirit, and if you are this will show me how to treat you!"

The woman screamed, but Alden and the manservant forced her to the corner of the room on which the hitherto unnoticed parchment had been tacked. Her cries now rose to a shrill cadence which was fairly earsplitting, but the physician dragged her on, inexorably determined to end it then and there.

As her feet touched the sacred parchment the woman was torn in a paraoxysm of pain, trembling as though from a chill.

"Oh, spare me!" she moaned, but Alden clung to her.

"Don't let go, John," he commanded.

Then a horrible sight greeted them. The color disappeared from her ceeks, her black locks became thinned and gray; her teeth disappeared, her shoulders, shrunken and stooped, seemed to stiffen with the clutching compression of a thousand years.

She was screaming, weaker and weaker, as John, horror-stricken, now turned away, covering the grewsome sight from his eyes with trembling fingers.

But the furious doctor still held her there.

"Will you confess to me? Will you tell me the truth if It take you off of the pentagram?" he demanded.

The tottering old woman, now changed to the same appearance which she had when she first visited the High Master of the Black Order, moaned almost pitifully. Her implacable tormentor still mastered the situation, and she nodded compliance.

Alden pulled her off the parchment of torture, and forced her to sit in the chair, still holding her firmly by the arms.

"If you don't tell me all, I will hold you there until your evil spirit disintegrates entirely!" he commanded.

The old woman's toothless mouth mumbled incoherently, and the wan, thin lips moved, but no sound came forth at first. Then she finally managed to speak.

"An incubus, a friend in man's form, hypnotized Myra this afternoon. She saw me kiss you, and thinks you are untrue in your love."

"What are they doing to her now?" demanded the physician, a new horror gripping his heart. "Answer, or I'll drag you back."

"He commanded her to meet him at the Gray Rocks, in the river bank; she was to wake up from her sleep and follow the light of the moon until he met her; then he was to make her walk out on the path above the water, the silver path, to the Land of the Moon, where all her troubles were to end!"

Alden turned with the words.

"Watch this woman, John, and see that she goes out. Lock the doors after me," he cried.

He felt in his pocket assuring himself that he had his revolver safely in place for emergencies. Then he rushed from the house followed by the old woman, who shook a trembling witch's claw after him. She picked up her bag, hobbled out of the room, studiously avoiding the terrible pentagram, and disappeared into the night, as John slammed the door behind her.

Alden was running down the street.

Now he took a short course, vaulting a stone wall, and running across the grounds of an old estate which bordered on the river. A watch dog bayed and pursued him. But the physician ran desperately on, and leaped over the far wall, just as the canine was almost upon him.

Down the declivity he ran, stumbling and falling more than once.

Ahead of him on the rippling surface of the great river he could see the glittering reflection of the moon's rays. He understood too well the meaning of the phrase: "The Silver Path!"

His boat house was dark, but he pounded furiously on the door of the caretaker's room with the but of his revolver. A sleepy voice finally answered him, and the door was thrown open.

"Quick, Mike, jump into my motor boat with me. It's life and death!" he cried.

The man stupidly blinked in the light of the doctor's flash-lamp, but the physician dragged him by main force to the motor boat, moored close by.

The doctor tugged at the machinery, until he had it finally "chug-chugging."

He jumped to the helm for a minute as the speedy little craft swung out from the shore.

"Here, you take a hand while I light the search light," he ordered and the man obeyed. "Head up the river to the Gray Rocks."

The glare of the strong battery-light shot forward like a silver arrow, and as they came to the dreaded rocks, Payson Alden saw Myra Maynard, walking out into the water, in the direction of the moon's reflection.

At her side was a dark figure.

The doctor drew his revolver, but hesitated to fire, fearing to miss and hit the hypnotized girl.

Suddenly there was a scream.

Myra, out shoulder deep in the water, had awakened from her trance, and her head sank beneath the waves as the other figure disappeared from view.

"Close in now!" yelled the physician, as he stood on the bow.

He dived over the side with a shrewd calculation, just in time to catch the form of the girl, dragged along beneath the surface by some curious undertow.

He swam back toward the launch with the limp form clasped in his strong arms. Had he been in time? he wondered. He could not tell as yet. It was a supreme moment of mental torture.

(To Be Continued.)

This Episode Today, Hippodrome, 9th st. and N. Y. ave.—Advt.

SIX SEEK TO HEAD PROHIBITION PARTY

New York Man Will Build His Campaign on Fact That He Makes Bottles.

ST. PAUL, Minn., July 9.—Six men want to be President and five men and two women want to be Vice President of the United States of America, via the Prohibition route.

They will be aspirants to head the Prohibition ticket, at the National Prohibition convention at St. Paul, July 18. George F. Wells, State chairman of the Prohibition party, made this announcement today.

The "dry" candidates are William Sulzer, former governor of New York; J. Frank Hanley, former governor of Indiana; Eugene N. Foss, formerly governor of Massachusetts; Sumner Haynes, Portland, Ind.; Francis Baldwin, Elmira, N. Y., and Frederick F. Wheeler, California.

Baldwin is expected to make his campaign for the head of the ticket upon the ground that he is the largest bottle manufacturer in the world, yet refuses to sell a single bottle for intoxicants. Wheeler was a candidate for nomination in 1903.

Five men and two women would sit at the right hand of the President, according to Wells. The women are Miss Marie C. Brehm, of Pittsburgh, and Miss Harris Armor, of Georgia. Miss Brehm is a national Woman's Christian Temperance Union lecturer. She was appointed by President Taft United States delegate to the twelfth International Congress on Alcoholism at London in 1911. Miss Armor has done much to make Georgia dry.

The five men are Judge Ben Lindsey, Denver; Finley C. Hendrickson, Cumberland, Md.; Frank W. Emerson, Los Angeles, Cal., movie magnate; Richmond Pearson Hobson, hero of the Spanish-American war, and James H. Woertendyke, Los Angeles.

City Shaken by Meteor Which Bursts Near Earth

YORK, Pa., July 9.—A mysterious explosion which shook the city and which some people took for a safe-blowing job or dynamite explosion, was later traced to the falling of a meteor.

Although no fragments of the celestial visitor have been found there are several persons who saw it falling through the air at 1 o'clock in the morning.

It is thought it was dissipated into gasses by its passage through the atmosphere and that the combustion of these gases produced the explosion.

Windows were broken and dishes shaken from cupboards by the concussion.

Ford's Boyhood Friend Buys New Car for $1.35

EDGAR, Neb., July 9.—John Schmidt, a boyhood friend of Henry Ford, mailed to the auto manufacturer personally a check for $1.35, asking him to ship a new Ford to him and "keep the change."

Ford called the bluff, however, and for the sake of boyhood days, shipped the car, which arrived today.

APPLY HAY'S HAIR HEALTH TO DARKEN YOUR GRAY HAIR

It is Harmless, No Dye, But Darkens Gray Hair So Evenly No One Can Tell.

Whenever your hair falls out or takes on that dull, lifeles, faded streaked, or gray appearance, simply shampoo hair and scalp a few times with Hay's Hair Health Color Restorer. All your gray hair then turns a beautiful dark shade, and entire head of hair becomes evenly dark, wavy, soft, fluffy, abundant, thick, and charming—just as hair appeared when you were 16 or 18 years old. Hay's Hair Health is a ready-to-use delightful hair color restorer, perfectly harmless, but applied two or three times a week, besides darkening gray hair, makes scalp healthy and clean. Stops dandruff and falling hair, and promotes its growth. Give it a trial. Sold on a money-back guarantee. Only 50c or $1 a bottle at People's Drug Store. Out-of-town folks supplied by mail.—Advt.

"TOO BAD— YOU'RE OLD"

With Your Hair You Would Look Ten Years Younger

How often we have heard this expression concerning a prematurely bald young-old man. It is absolutely unnecessary that any man should be subjected to such sympathy from his friends, for there is a preparation on the market which, if used in time will remove all symptoms of falling hair, dandruff, and irritations of the scalp and promote the growth of the hair.

If you have been experimenting with preparations containing cocoanut oil or alkalis (if it foams it contains alkalis) throw them away at once! Go to O'Donnell's Drug Store, 904 F street, and ask for a 50c bottle of Speiser's Scalp Tonic. Use it according to directions, and in a reasonable time the most satisfactory results will be obtained. Remember, Mr. O'Donnell guarantees this preparation personally—if it fails, ask him for your money.—Advt.

The Mysteries of Myra

An Inspiring Novel and Motion Picture Drama

Written by Hereward Carrington.

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Dramatized by Charles W. Goddard.

CHAPTER LV.

The Hatred Implacable.

"VARNEY, I would speak with you!"

The discordant voice rang out through the clammy recesses of the council room. Arthur Varney arose from his knees, where with his fellow members of the Black Order he had been swinging in rhythmic chanting, a part of the weird rites of the Devil Worshipers.

The leader of ceremonies had just opened a meeting of the evil clan, as the brazen gong rang out.

"Yes, master," answered the clubman, as he went slowly toward the black velvet curtains, which puffed in the cold breeze of the subterranean chambers.

There were three resonant crashes of the gong once more, and he entered.

Into his vision there grew stronger with the spreading red luminosity the sight of the gnarled features of the supreme ruler of the order.

The two exchanged the sign of their brotherhood, thumbs pointing upward, from clenched hands, pressed against either side of their cheeks. The diabolical significance of this sent a shudder through Varney. The piercing black eyes of his superior did not miss the hesitant manner, and the despairing look upon his human tool of death.

"Look in my eyes, Varney!" was the curt command.

The man raised his glance and then dropped the lids, as though he feared that some inner weakness might be discovered by the gimlet sharpness of the master's stare.

"Varney, you have been brooding of late. I know all you have done, all that you have said, and even your innermost thoughts. My power is so tremendous that I will know every weakness—every unfaithful thought which you have!"

Varney, despite his effort at calmness, started ever so slightly.

The High Master observed.

He raised a bony fist, clenched until it looked like the talon of some omnivorous bird of prey. He leaned forward with an evil curse on his thin lips.

"Arthur Varney, woe betide you if you play false to your oaths to the Black Order and to me, your Master of Soul and Eternity!" he cried. "You are letting your passion for this girl, Myra Maynard, weaken your loyalty. If you attempt to betray us I will . . ."

His lips drew back over the fang-like teeth. His hand descended toward the cowering man.

"Oh, master! I swear that I have obeyed your every command. But, master, I do love Myra Maynard. She does not love me, but she could learn. My influence with her even now is so strong that I would force her to turn over her fortune to the order," he began piteously.

How often before had he made this weak plea in vain, to the indissuadable monster sitting in judgment above him. The horror of it all was finally borne in his iron nerves. Through such frightful catastrophe had they been during these past few weeks that he was yielding to the strain. No longer did he believe the occult promises made by the master of a reward of ettrnal love and existence with Myra Maynard in mysterious paradises beyond the grave!

But the supreme ruler of the Black Order banged upon the richly carved altar with a furious fist.

"Varney, I have told you once too often that this cannot be. Myra Maynard is possessed of a power, which, if she ever learns to master it, it will undo me, and our order. She must be disposed of. I command you to take out all the members of the Black Order this afternoon, to scour the country, and leave no opportunity for her to escape. My will is supreme here, and at the slightest sign of your falter I will give you the most horrible punishment which the mind of man can conceive, and which only my art can administer!"

At these awful words, the sinister truth of which Varney understood only too well, he bowed low.

"I obey, Oh, mighty master;" he murmured weakly. And with a hopeles drop of his broad shoulders, he made a low obeisance, and backed, shuddering from the secret room.

Once in the general council chamber he gave directions to the leader of the ceremonies, who evidently understood even more than he the nature of the master's plans.

But it was part of the cunning ruler's scheme to force no other than the lovelorn Varney to lead in the cowardly attack upon the unsuspecting girl. He was certain of his dominance with the man, and confident that his supposed innocence of any connection with the evil order would cover the most daring episode of the crime.

Varney and the other members removed their black robes, soon to be hurrying in a formation like a great net to encircle the unsuspecting girl.

And all this time Myra was as happy as a child, in the glorious thrill of such weather as would dispel al brooding thoughts of unseen fear.

Little did she dream of the treachery of the man she had promised to marry.

CHAPTER LVI.

The Woodland Whistle.

MYRA stood in the window of her bed room dropping corn to the windowsill, while her pet pigeons fluttered and crooned happily over the treat.

One beautifully burnished bird, which she had especially trained, flew to her shoulder and daintily pecked a piece of corn from the girl's rosebud lips.

"Lucky bird!" called a merry voice from the garden drive below at this juncture.

"Oh, is that you, Dr. Alden?" exclaimed the girl, blushing prettily. "I did not know that you had the horses ready so quickly. I'll be right down, for I have been dressed for the ride nearly half an hour."

The physician was a handsome figure, as he sat astride his spirited horse, with the unconscious grace of a born equestrian. Myra's eyes reflected a little unconscious spark of admiration as she stepped through the doorway accompanied by her mother. Mrs. Maynard did not resist the same impulse, as the doctor slid to the ground to help Myra with her mount.

"Where are you going, dear?" asked her mother. "Do be very careful, now, won't you?"

"Yes, indeed. Where shall we ride today, Dr. Alden?" asked Myra, holding in her impatient steed with a firm grip of the small gauntleted fingers.

"I rode yesterday through the Pine Woods," Alden replied. "I believe that if we go up there we will enjoy it—it's as wild as some mountain trail in Tennessee."

"Splendid! All right, mother, I'll be as careful as an old maid on a merry-go-round pony! Good-by!"

And blowing a kiss to Mrs. Maynard, she led the way down the driveway.

She had not been gone, with her escort, more than ten minutes when the telephone bell rang.

It was Arthur Varney, and when Willis, the butler, informed him that Myra was not in he inquired for her mother. They exchanged the usual pleasantries and Varney ended up with a polite question as to Myra's whereabouts.

"Oh, she is out horseback riding with Dr. Alden. They were going up through the old Pine Woods section," answered Mrs. Maynard. "It is such a beautiful day, and she was not able to reach you to ask you t ogo along, Arthur."

Myra's mother was very fond of Varney, and she felt that she should make some excuse for the ride with a rival. However, Varney laughed, albeit with a sharp contraction of the eyebrows.

"That's all right. I will try to see her this evening; perhaps we can have a little hand of bridge after dinner," he remarked agreeably.

"Splendid!" said Mrs. Maynard. "Come early and take dinner with us. Now you must promise."

Varney did yield, before he rang off, but he had sore misgivings. He hurriedly telephoned the high master of the location of the girl, and within a few minutes two speedy automobiles were racing up to head off the unsuspecting pair of equestrians.

The ride was a welcome relief to the physician, who had been working unusually hard in his psychic laboratory, and over some scientific articles which he had under preparation for a well-known magazine.

And so they cantered along, enjoying the twittering of the birds, the thrill of the warm sun, and the almost intoxicating perfume of woodland and flowery stretch of roadside.

They did not observe that more than once a sinister face peered out from behind a tree or shrub as they passed.

But, finally, Alden became aware that his saddle girth was becoming slightly loosened. He called to Myra, drew up his mount and vaulted to the ground.

"Just a minute, Myra," he said. "I'll fix this and be with you right away."

The girl laughed back.

"No, I'll ride on and you will have to do some fancy horsemanship to catch up with me!"

Alden was dismayed.

"Don't ride on!" he called. "Wait for me!"

His tone was almost imperious, and maiden-like, Myra resented it, with a pout.

She did ride on, and by the time Alden had adjusted the girth and mounted his horse she was out of view beyond a curve in the heavily wooded road.

But she was visible to more than one person unseen by her. Among them was Arthur Varney, struggling against his heart's own promptings to bring the girl to destruction.

Alden galloped after her, but came to a fork in the road. The thoroughfare was so heavily verdured on either side of this point that it was impossible to go along either section of the branch more than a hundred yards.

THE DOVES FELT AT HOME

MYRA STOOD READY TO SHOOY

He stopped and listened; there was no sound of hoof beats.

Myra had coquettishly stopped her horse behind the first sharp turn to tease him.

Alden put his fingers to his lips and whistled with a shrill bird note.

He hearkened once more and now came the answer.

He had taught Myra the trick, although the girl did not master it well.

"There she is," he laughed, with relief, and whistled again.

But this time the whistle came from two directions at once. He paused and then a vague alarm smote his breast. What could be the meaning of this, he poundered.

Again he made the signal, and promptly came two answering notes, one from the right turn of the road and the other from the opposite side. The heavy undergrowth of the winding roadways baffled any attempt to peer through them.

"This is serious," he muttered, as he listened again.

Still there was no sound of horse's hoofs upon the ground, and after a moment's hesitation he paced madly on to the left.

And as it happened Myra had taken the right turn.

Alden rode for fifteen minutes as hard as his panting horse would carry him.

I didn't know she could ride so fast!" he exclaimed, angry at the worriment which it had caused him.

Then, at last, as he came to a long stretch of open country, from which he could look down on a clear view of the highway, he became convinced that he had taken the wrong fork.

"Well, I must get back, or Heaven only knows what may happen to her!" and he turned his horse to retrace the mad flight. "But that was a curious echo. I never heard one before in such thick woods as those."

Meanwhile Myra had blundered upon a curious tragedy, for these modern days of cyncism against everything of the mystic.

CHAAPTER LVII.

The Witch of the Woods.

A GROUP of boys, with a sturdy, broad shouldered bulldog on a leash, were standing at the foot of a big tree.

As Myra, irritated at Payson Alden's apparent stupidity in following her raced along the roadway she caught a sudden view of this little tableau.

"Sic 'im, Tige;" cried one lad.

Myra brought her horse to a stop; it was simple feminine curiosity. But a sweeter feminine instinct, the sympathy for the weaker in a struggle, prompted her to ride up a minute later, after she saw a pathetic little scene enacted.

An old woman, stooped of shoulder and with a ragged cloak about her weazened shoulders, rushed out of a small frame house nearby.

"You let that cat alone!" she cried to the youngsters.

"Oh, the cat's up a tree. What do we care?" cried the largest boy of the group. "Let's beat up the old witch, for luck!"

And he picked up a broken branch from the ground. The others followed him, and to Myra's consternation rushed at the expostulating old woman.

The girl tapped her nervous steed with the riding crop and leaped over the narrow gully at the roadside, speeding into their midst, just as the biggest boy, evidently the "gang bully" was raising his impromptu cudgel to strike the screaming woman.

One of the boys gave a warning cry and they scattered, but not before the indignant girl had delivered a punishing stroke with the crop on the shoulder of the biggest lad.

"You get away from here, or I will lash all of you" she cried. Her flashing eyes and the imperious note in her voice gave evidence to the young marauders that she meant what she said. They obeyed with alacrity, but before they departed with the growling bulldog nature asserted itself with a parting verbal shot:

"You'd better be careful of the old witch!"

"She'll put a spell on you!"

Other, less impolite jeers, followed, but as the boys disappeared Myra rode her horse up to the tree, and reached up for the trembling cat on an overhanging limb. The animal yielded to her gentle hand as she lifted it down and turned toward the frightened old woman.

"Here's tabby, safe and sound. I am sorry the boys alarmed you," she began.

She slid nimbly to the ground, and stroking the black fur of the animal, lowered it to the grass.

The old woman regarded her with a curious expression.

"You're very good to an old woman that every one hates!" were her surprising words.

"Why! I don't understand. I don't believe that everyone hates you."

The old woman shook her head, as her hands trembled with the pitiful palsy of extreme old age.

Neither Myra nor she saw two heads, under heavy black caps, protruding from the tree trunks a few yards to the right.

"Aren't you afraid of a witch?" was the hesitating query.

Myra laughed merrily, as she shook her blonde head.

"Not at all. I don't believe in such nonsense. It's only an excuse to make fun of people who have reached the age where they should be respected and loved," she responded. "I am not afraid of you at all."

The old woman laughed now, with her wrinkled eyes squinting until they became mere slits in a leathery face. Yet there was a pleasant ring to the merriment.

"You're a queer little girl," she said. "Not like any one I've seen for, oh, so many years. I may not be a witch, but I can do something nice for you!"

"What is that?" asked Myra, eagerly. "Can you tell my fortune? Van you tell me who I am going to marry?"

And she held out her soft, white palm, after impetously jerking off her gauntlet.

The old crone shook her gray head, with another cackle.

"That's what all girls want to know. It's easy to tell things like that when you have my power," and she started toward the door of the little house, followed by the black cat, which arched its back as it brushed against the hem of the long brown skirt.

As Myra looked at her she realized that the unfortunate old creature did indeed resemble the drawings of witches which she had seen in old story books in childhood's credulous days.

"But, I'd not tell a nice girl about the future. If it's sad news it's better not to know it. And if it's good news, it's nicer to be surprised," she mumbled and shook her toothless jaw wisely. "But I was young once myself, you know. And I can show you some one who has always been young—only the young believe in them—and only the young in innocence and goodness can see them again, except me."

Myra followed her, fascinated.

"Why, what do you mean?" she asked.

"I can show you the real fairies!"

Myra smiled, doubtfully, but the old woman shook a talon-finger, as she paused at the door.

"You don't believe it, but wait until I get some of the fairy salve, and I'll rub it on your arm and prove it to you."

Myra could hardly believe her ears. Now, she guessed that the strange old woman was demented, but before she had returned to her horse the door opened again and she reappeared.

This time she bore a queer white jar in her hands.

"It's nearly all gone!" cackled the old lady, "but you were good to me and my tabby-cat. I'll let you have a little. Roll up your sleeve."

The skinny finger was scraping at the bottom of the jar. Myra hesitated, but her strange companion nodded emphatically.

"Don't be afraid. I wouldn't hurt you. I don't hurt any one. Just try it and ceee!"

She insisted, and Myra, almost against her will yielded to the piercing dominance, of those superanturally bright old eyes. The old woman rubbed and rubbed, upon the soft white flesh of her forearm.

Whether it was the vision, under some strange form of hypnotism, or some other occult manifestation of which neither she nor Alden could ever find out, something began to dance about in the tender green blades of the grass at her feet. Then other little creatures joined in the merry-making.

And to Myra's firm belief—despite the unreality of it, despite the bright sunlight and her conviction that here, in the glorious woods, of all places she could have no hallucinations—the fairies actually danced before her on the little stretch of green turf!

CHAPTER LVIII.

The Spell of Witchcraft.

THERE was the sound of thundering hoofbeats upon the roadway, and Alden's steed dashed up.

"Thank heavens!" muttered the physician, dismounting and walking toward the peaceful duo—Myra, standing silently with fascinated eyes as she watched the grass, and the old woman at her side.

"Oh, Dr. Alden, I saw the fairies dancing!" exclaimed the girl, happily.

The physician laughed and regarded the old woman with a sharp glance of suspicion. But nothing seemed wrong to Myra.

"We'd better be returning, Miss Myra. You gave me a scare and I went down the wrong road," he said.

"But you should ee them, too," insisted Myra. "Won't you show my friend the fairies? I'll even pay you."

The old woman shook her head.

"No, I cannot do it now, for I've used up the last bit of magic salve. And, besides, he's too old to believe them," she answered.

Alden glared at her now, and beckoned toward Myra's horse, which was becoming restive.

"Let's go home and let well enough alone," he said.

Myra was offended at what seemed his curtness, and she bowed politely to the quaint old person.

"I'll come back some time, if I may, and learn some more," she declared. The old woman waved her hand strangely in the air, and smiled as though in some sort of silent blessing. She turned to enter the little hut.

"I don't think you ought to take such risks," said Alden. "After all your occult experiences you should have learned the danger. I didn't like the look in that old hag's eyes!"

Myra was now truly offended, as only a girl can be offended by the man she likes.

"I don't care to be scolded. You missed something very wonderful. And I want to go home myself, now," she said, haughtily.

They turned back on the roadway. She was silent for awhile.

"Oh, look, there's the little railroad station which I passed on the way here from the fork. There is a poor telegraph operator who was sound asleep in there when I came up."

"He will have a wreck on the road. He ought to be careful!" observed Alden.

"Poor fellow, I did wake him up and told him not to go asleep again. He said that his assistant was sick and he had to work twenty-four hours a day until they got a new man."

She rode toward the station, peered into the window and then jumped down to the platform, walking toward the door.

Alden followed her in surprise.

"Wake up, sir. You might lose your position if any one found you asleep again," said Myra, touching his shoulder kindly.

"Oh, thank you, miss," and the tired young operator rubbed his eyes. "I'm so sorry, but I'm so tired."

Alden smiled sympathetically.

"I'll tell you how to make an alarm clock. Hold that tin pan in your hand, when you get drowsy and nod. And if you go to sleep you will wake up when it falls on the floor," he said with a serious tone in his voice.

The operator looked at him incredulously, laughed, and then promised to try it. He had six more hours of duty before him.

"If you go to sleep again I'll haunt you," teased Myra.

Alden and Myra rode on then, little knowing what had happened at the home of the old woman.

When they reached Myra's home Alden dismounted to help her down. They had been gone perhaps a couple of hours.

"I must feed my pigeons again before I let the groom take the horse," she said. She hunted up some crushed corn and began to feed the birds once more, as Alden watched her with an admiring glance.

"Why, look what this pigeon has on its foot!" exclaimed Myra, in surprise, as she picked up one which had lit on her shoulder.

It carried a finely written note attached to one of its legs, with a small silver wire.

Myra read it. Then she chuckled.

"She must be a witch! Look what she said!"

Alden read the missive incredulously. It was scrawled over a tiny drawing of an old woman, with a witch's hat, riding a broomstick.

"If you want more of the Witch's ointment come tonight!" it said.

"You remain home tonight!" cautioned Alden imperiously.

"I'll do just as I please, sir—you are becoming a dictator, and I don't like you!" cried Myra. She walked into the house in a huff, with her pretty head up in the air. Alden waited for a farewell and then laughingly mounted his horse to go home.

On the road he passed Arthur Varney, driving his new automobile. The two men barely nodded. As soon as Alden was out of sight Varney drove into the Maynard estate, and hurried up the portico steps. Myra was changing to her dinner gown and Mrs. Maynard spoke about the curious message on the foot of the pigeon. Varney dismissed it as the joke of some friend, and Mrs. Maynard left him alone for a few minutes. He caught up the telephone receiver, assured that no one was within earshot.

"Hello, is this you, Master?" he whispered, when his number had been obtained. "Our man caught one of her pigeons and I see it has returned with a queer message."

"Good, Varney. That was from me. Take her to the Witch's house, up in the Pine Woods when she asks to go to night. We will get her there. Do not betray your trust!"

And he hung up the receiver. Varney did not know that two of the Black Order had sprung out of the woods after Myra's departure from the old woman's house, and forced her to tell about the ointment, but was more terrified than ever of the Master's cunning.

After dinner that night, Mrs. Maynard retired early, leaving Varney and Myra together.

The girl then told of her desire to visit the old woman's place once more. He tried oddly enough, to dissuade her, but suddenly over her shoulder in the reflection of the window, he seemed to see a vision of the High Master, with the thumbs upturned on either side of the evil face. He weakened and agreed to take her in his machine.

They sped out along the road, at Myra's direction, until after half an hour's ride they found the clearing.

Myra dismounted with agility from the throbbing car. As she did so Varney slipped a revolver into the girl's hand.

"You may need this," he muttered, and forced her to slip it into the pocket of her automobile coat. Then he trembled at his own treachery to the Black Order.

The girl hurried toward the door of the little house. A dim light shone through a window. As she knocked four masked men sprung from the roadside upon Varney and pretended to struggle. Then they rushed at the girl, who had stepped within.

"I received your message," exclaimed Myra, as she peered about the dimly lit interior. "I came for the ointment, as you told me to do."

The old woman arose stifly from the cot upon which she had been lying.

"It is a trick! I didn't send for you," she cried, affrightedly. Outside were voices, and the crone sprang toward the door to swing it shut and bar it. Rough hands were pounding at the portal; the men were demanding admittance. The two women stood quiet, in their terror. Then some heavy beams or ladder, Myra could not tell which, began to bang rhythmically against the door; the intruders were using it as a battering ram.

Myra remembered the revolver which Varney had slipped to her. She drew it from her pocket and fired three times in rapid succession. At the last report there was a cry of anguish from the other side of the wooden door. Then silence indicated a temporary retreat.

"They will return," said the old woman. "When they do, I will show you how to escape, for you were kind to an old witch like me!"

Myra sank weakly into a chair as her companion patted her shoulder and then her forehead soothingly. The girl's body suddenly seemed to become lifeless. Far off in the telegraph station the drowsy operator, nodding once more, seemed to behold a vision of the same young woman who had chided him that afternoon. She seemed to lean over his shoulder, this fair apparition, to write a message on the top blank of a message pad on the desk before him. Unconsciously he began to tick-tick the name and address, then the message, as he saw it written, sending it along the wire to the next station.

As he finished the spirit vanished and he awoke with a start. The tinpan dropped noisily on the floor, and he rubbed his eyes.

"I wonder if that was a dream?" muttered the operator. He looked at the pad of telegraph blanks in front of him. But there was no message written upon the yellow sheets.

However, Dr. Alden had received a telegram, transmitted for speed from the receiving office by telephone. The message read: "I am in the Witch's house. Save me. Myra."

The physician hurriedly called up the police station, located in the suburbs near this lonely address. The captain promised action, with his reserves, at once.

Alden summoned a taxicab, armed himself, and was soon speeding through the dark streets toward the rustic highway over which he had ridden so carefree that afternoon.

Within the hut Myra had returned to consciousness, under the old woman's administrations.

As she rose, exhausted from her curious trance, she sniffed suspiciously.

"What's that? Something is burning!" she exclaimed. The old woman ran to the other side of the little house, felt the wooden wall and wailed hopelessly.

"They have set fire to this side," she exclaimed. "If we run out they will catch us. They threatened my life this afternoon when you left and now they will kill me surely."

Myra fired the remaining shots in the chamber of the weapon through the wall, but evidently no harm was done to the conspirators outside. The flames now began to lick their way into the room, through cracks and chinks of the wodwork.

"Oh, we are doomed," she exclaimed, but the old woman drew her toward the other corner.

"I have a secret passage here by which we may escape; follow me." She raised some boards and disappeared into a dark hole.

Myra obeyed, and was soon crawling on hands and knees through a shallow, roughly excavated tunnel. After five minutes or more she was relieved to breath the fresh night air again. They had reached the mouth of the passage and emerged in a clump of heavy underbrush.

"Come now—run!" cried the old woman. She made away with the same surprising alacrity which Myra had observed before.

But dark forms in the woodland espied them. Shots were fired, and the old woman dropped cautiously to her knees. Myra crouched down as well, her beating heart threatening to betray their whereabouts.

"Don't move—I'll beglamour them so that we will look like trees to them," said the old woman, making some curious passes with her hands in the direction of their pursuers. At her command, Myra lay flat upon the ground while the old woman crouched.

Four men, weapons in hand, rushed toward them. Then they stopped.

"Nothing but a fallen tree and a stump!" cried one of them, pointing at Myra and her aged protector. "I could have sworn that they were the two women."

He rubbed his eyes in a dazed way, as though half hypnotized. The others peered around stupidly, cursing in their disappointment.

On the roadside, Alden, with several policemen, was rushing toward the flaming house. His heart sank as he saw the walls cave in with a great shower of angry sparks shooting skyward.

"Too late!" he muttered. "They have succeeded!"

With the bluecoats he ran toward the house, to do what he could—ineffectual as he felt it would be.

Suddenly from the thick woodland, behinn the ruined hut, he heard the piercing scream of a woman.

He dashed in that direction, followed by a police officer. He fired point blank at two men who opposed him, and they melted away in the darkness.

He almost tumbled over Myra, who was still lying upon the ground. He saw three other figures just disappearing ahead of them; but the safety of the beloved girl came first. He caught her up in his arms. She had fainted. He bore her in his arms to the automobile, where she regained consciousness, to inquire about her protectress.

"The police have found no one in the woods," answered Alden. "Heaven help the old soul."

"The man had just recognized her when she screamed," explained Myra, "and he struck her with a knife! Oh, it was dreadful, but what can have become of Arthur Varney?"

An officer just walked over to them with Varney at his side limping noticeably. The latter had been found in his own automobile gagged and bound. It was a perfect alibi, and yet Alden listened to the story with a growing distrust. At Myra's insistence he rode back home with her in Varney's machine. She recounted the whole story to him and told of her dream. Alden surprised her with the account of the telegram.

"And yet they say that dreams are never true," he remarked. "We will have a whole lot to investigate, before we understand all of this night's work!"

He was right. Even more surprises were to come!

(To Be Continued.)

This Episode Today, at Hippodrome, 9th and New York Ave.—Advt.

First Episode Today, Georgia Theater, 3422 Georgia Ave. N. W.—Advt.

A GAIN OF 8 POUNDS ON TWO BOTTLES OF DRECO

Mrs. Walter F. Dixon, of Dorsey, Howard County, Md., Is Saving Money on Doctors.

Mr. Walter F. Dixon, of Dorsey, in the employ of the B. & O. R. R., made this interesting statement the other day: There's sincerity in every line—and enough proof in every paragraph to convince anybody. Here's what he said:

"If you ever saw a man spending every dollar he could lay hold of with physicians, trying to cure his wife—I am that man! I positively spent what was a fortune to me, and seemed as if I could never get ahead any, for the constant drag of doctor's bills. And the worst of it was, I saw little or no improvement in her condition. She suffered from chronic constipation, pains in the back and limbs, was very nervous, had so little appetite she ate like a bird, and had almost constant headaches.

"The sort of thing went on for a long time; we'd try first one doctor and then another. She took bottle after bottle of drugs of every sort, and any benefit she experienced was so slight, it wasn't worth talking about, and she was getting pretty discouraged, I can tell you.

"I heard of Dreco somewhere—I don't remember where now! My wife said she'd try it thoroughly, if I'd get it for her. She was about to that point where she'd try anything to get relief.

"She's taken two bottles now, and she's a new woman! Absolutely, you wouldn't know her! She's looking better and feeling better than for years. After the first few doses the pains in her back and limbs left her, and she was comfortable for the first time in months! She was able to eat like any other normal woman, and suffered no ill effects afterwards! No more trouble from constipation, and, in fact, I consider that another bottle or two at the most will make an entirely well woman of her—and you can bet she's going to have them!"

Get Dreco today at any O'Donnell Drug Store, Bury's in Anacostia, Allen's in Alexandria.—Advt.

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CHAPTER LVIX.

The Master Persists.

THE potentate of the Devil Worshipers, enthroned in his inner chamber, regarded Arthur Varney's nervous face with an expression of mingled fury and contempt.

Varney, kneeling in humble adoration before the High Master, trembled as though with an ague.

"I have told you my plan. Your remonstrances are vain, Varney! Another speech like that and I shall punish you as I have done with other traitors to our order in the past!" cried the Master. "The girl must die! Even should you obtain her fortune for me, by marrying her, I will never be satisfied until I have put her from the land of the living!"

He smote the great brazen gong at his side.

The ceremonial leader entered at the summons, to be greeted by the horn-thumbed sign of the evil brotherhood.

"Your command, O Master?"

"Bring in the man and woman who have bargained to serve us," snarled the Master. Again he addressed Varney whose downcast face was drawn and haggard from some internal struggle between the good and evil of his strange personality.

"But, Master," he pleaded, "if she——"

"I have spoken my will," came the strident response. "She knows entirely too much about our order. Gradually, under the training of this scoundrel, Doctor Alden, she is acquiring greater psychic power. She will soon be enabled to undermine our strength and I must slay her, and Alden, as well, in order to guard our own brotherhood. One sign of weakness now—and it will be the last you make, in this life Varney. * * * And remember, that you have scores to settle when you are ushered into the existence beyond the grave. I advise you to get all you can get out of the present one!"

Varney did not reply.

Even as the Master ceased, two figures advanced, guided by the ceremonial director. Varney drew his hood about his face, as the potentate commanded that the blindfolds be removed from the faces of the man and woman who were now instructed to kneel before him.

The first of the newcomers was a heavy-jowled individual, whose swarthy skin and rough features indicated that he had been engaged in outdoor work during much of his life. He blinked in the unaccustomed brilliancy, as the red rays radiated from a great luminous disc directly behind the Master's head.

Then he gazed, bewildered, about him, at the faces which were all apparently strange to him.

He looked with surprise at the woman at his side. She was apparently forty years of age or thereabouts. Her heavy, sensual features betokened a nature more cruel, and infinitely more cunning, than that of her companion. She regarded the man with curiosity, and returned the Master's keen scrutiny with a glance of insolent self-confidence.

As Varney, with the same anxious expression upon his tense features, studied them he realized that the villainous couple gave proof of the Master's judgment in choosing "tools." Here was as murderous a looking twain as one could have found after diligent search in the underworld!

"Do you understand what I have engaged you to do?" demanded the Master.

Both nodded, and the leader of the Devil Worshipers smiled in silent, crocodile mirth.

The Master began to instruct them in their new duties, and spoke without interruption, until with a significant gesture across his own throat, he ended significantly: "The knife, then, the knife! And see that it cuts deep! It cannot cut too deep!"

The woman leered at him.

"I can use a knife, and use it well!" she exclaimed. "But, poison is quicker and easier!"

The man, whom the Master had addressed as "Pedro," stepped back, apprehensively.

"But I don't want to use the knife, or the poison either. I was told that it's just a kidnaping plan! I don't want no electric chair for all the money in the world!"

The Master glared viciously at Pedro, and cried: "I command you to obey me to the letter. I said the knife, and I will punish any disobedience!"

"But, Master, he is right!" interrupted Varney. "I will be recognized by Mrs. Maynard, and perhaps Myra, as you have planned it. Then, there is Alden, who is always just where one least expects it!"

"Will you do as I bid?" cried the Master.

Varney shook his head and Pedro grunted a surly "No!"

The ruler of the Black Order suddenly raised his arms, extending his bony, clawlike fingers toward the two recalcitrants. A terrible scene followed—for it seemed as though forked lightning shot forth from those stiffened digits.

Straight to the breast of Varney and the obstinate Pedro sprang the bolts of living fire.

The men screamed and writhed in agony as they sank miserably to their knees. The woman, regarding them with scorn, laughed cruelly at their anguish. The Master gave her an approving glance and dropped his hands exultingly.

"Will you obey?" he demanded.

"Yes, yes!" groaned the sufferers, as the sparks faded out. They weakly rose to their feet, while the evil pontiff beckoned to the ceremonial leader.

"Take them out," he commanded. And in a whisper he added: "Watch Varney and the man, for I mistrust them!"

The woman was blindfolded once more, as was Pedro. The black order member led the man through the maze of passages to the old stone culvert, which was one of the secret exits of the council rooms.

"Go that way," he commanded, pointing to the north. "Meet the woman at the old house, where you will find the automobile. Hasten, for the time has almost come for action."

Arthur Varney, with head bowed, next passed into the open air, regarded with scorn by his companions. Weakness in evil was the greatest crime in the eyes of the Devil Worshipers, and he realized that he was regarded as a fallen member, the news of his punishment having been whispered among the brethren in the outer council room.

"Go that way," commanded the ceremonial leader, pointing to the south. "See what Myra Maynard is doing, and be ready to obey the master's commands to the letter!"

The member watched him disappear, until confident that he had not rejoined the untrustworthy Pedro for a possible conference.

Then the woman was brought forth, her blindfold removed. She was given a final word of instruction. Her brutal face lit up with an unholy light as some gold was slipped into her hand.

"I will earn it, aye, I will earn it!" she gloated. "And I will get more than this," was the muttered undertone, as she followed in the path of Pedro.

Varney walked slowly, lost in a thousand miserable thoughts, as he endeavored to crystallize some plan of action. He realized that the master had conceived and started the execution of the most cunning of all his plans. It seemed impossible to thwart him, without absolutely sacrificing his own life. Yet, so dear had Myra Maynard become to Arthur Varney that this great offering of love seemed not too much to him now.

As he passed along the quiet semi-suburban streets toward the Maynard mansion, Varney reviewed the strange mase of incidents which had passed during the recent months.

It seemed like some dream, now, in the inspiring, healthy environment of pretty gardens, flowering shrubs, and happy homes, as he strolled on to complete the work of sin which strange fate had decreed to be his task.

He remembered his early association with Myra, when supplied with almost unlimited funds by the High Master, he had forced his attentions upon her and her mother, until he had ingratiated himself in the family's good graces.

First, his feeling had been one of selfish satisfaction that his charm had been irresistible by the innocent young girl. He knew that she had become interested in him; her mother's friendliness was unmistakable, and ever increasing.

But, and his heart hardened as the thought came, the advent of the smiling, confident and ever-gallant Doctor Payson Alden had changed all these things. Myra had been treating the physician with a growing confidence and a sweet intimacy which infuriated Varney. Just when he had succeeded, through the connivance of his evil Master, in winning the girl's consent to marry him, the physician had thwarted his plans. Myra had told him that she did not care for him enough to be his wife. The romance had been "going by the board" ever since.

Again and again, Varney had yielded to the occult power of his chief, against the promptings of his better nature and his growing infatuation for Myra, in the campaign of murder and destruction.

Now, for the second time had he made up his mind to cast personal caution to the winds and help the girl escape from this new and almost certain fate.

He had reached the street on which the Maynard mansion was located, and he walked more slowly down the hedgerow, toward the driveway.

He was passing the smooth lawn now, on which the croquet arches were set, and he stopped as he heard Myra's silvery laughter.

Her merry voice thrilled him. Now at last, he told himself, he would prove himself a man—and a lover! He would warn her in time to save her. He peered through the leaves of the hedge, and a wave of resentment swept over him. That laugh was not for him, and the happy music of it was inspired by none other than the hated Doctor Alden who stood near the girl on the croquet green.

Myra made a shot with her mallet, and missed. Alden took his turn and the wooden sphere struck the final goal stake.

She looked up at Alden's droll grimace of triumph.

"Lucky at games—unlucky in love, they say," she told him. Alden's face became serious, as he regarded her with a wistful look.

"I'm afraid so," he answered.

But Myra reached for his hand, timidly, and held it for just the fraction of a second.

"I didn't mean that," she said, and then dropped her eyes, as she started toward the house.

Alden followed her, quietly, while Varney drew back from the hedge. His face was flushed, and he clenched his hands angrily. His former mood of self-sacrifice was swept aside in a jealous maelstrom of bitter egotism.

"And I, fool that I am, would have made way for him—I to have given up life, happiness, everything, in order that he could woo her in peace! It shall not be. If I can not have Myra Maynard for myself, Alden shall never do it!"

And he strode angrily toward the driveway, his eyes burning with hatred, his mouth grimly set in his determination to win all for himself or sacrifice the all of others.

He met Alden coming down the drive, and the two men exchanged the curtest of formal greetings.

There was a mutual interchange of distrust and dislike in their eyes as they passed.

* * * * * * *

CHAPTER LX.

At the Curio Shop.

MYRA was sitting in the library engrossed in a Cosmopolitan Magazine, when her mother entered the room.

"My dear, you are neglecting your music; you simply must practice now, for you have had entirely too many distractions of late," was the maternal reproof.

"All right, dear," but there was a sigh as she laid aside the story. "I was so glad to read something to take my mind off our own tragedies here in the house. And my music always makes me sad, of late."

Myra went to the piano, and was diligently running scales, with a surprising skill in the slender white fingers, as Arthur Varney was admitted to the house.

He passed Willis, to enter the music room.

As he did so, with unusual awkwardness, he brushed past an antique vase which stood upon the table near the door. Indeed, an observer might have deduced that it was an intentional accident, but as the butler entered the room, Varney was picking up the fragments with simulated mortification.

"What a clumsy fool I am!" he exclaimed.

Myra had followed the butler, and she shook her head in disparagement of the loss.

"It is nothing, Arthur," she answered to his protestations of regret. "Just some old piece that father bought in the Orient. The house is full of them and one, more or less, won't be missed."

Mrs. Maynard had entered, and she echoed Myra's indifference. But Varney was strangely apologetic.

"I insist that you allow me to replace it," he persisted. "And, by the way, I remember an old curio store which I passed this morning. It had just such a vase in the window. I will feel very mortified if you do not come down with me right now and let me replace the loss!"

He was so insistent about it that finally, to make him feel better, Mrs. Maynard and Myra agreed to ride down with him. The butler was sent for the automobile, and in a few minutes they were riding toward the old shop.

It was as much of a curio as its contents, this old place.

"I have often passed it," said Myra, as the car drew up before the door of the shop. "And now I am really glad that you brought us down, Arthur, for I have always wanted to browse around among the quaint old tables, and chinaware, and tapestries."

The three of them entered, while the chauffeur drew his machine up a little nearer the doorway, for their convenience on the return.

There he sat smoking a cigarette and mentally laughing at the "rich folks" for their foolish interest in what he termed "old junk." The aged proprietor of the place led them about the rooms listlessly. He seemed absolutely uninterested in the possibility of a sale, and he returned to his account books, as they walked from one antique to the other.

Varney, unseen by the other, looked at his watch and then peered cautiously into the rear room as though expecting some one. The place was empty, however. A large door opened upon an alleyway in the back of the building, and it seemed from Varney's manner that this portal was important in his scheming.

He rejoined Myra and her mother, who were discussing some cracked chinaware on a weather-beaten mahogany table.

"I prefer Wedgewood ware," insisted Myra, while her mother objected and tried to make up her mind which dusty tea set she wished to choose from those on the table.

Varney heard a footfall in the rear of the store.

"There are some Wedgewood pieces in that back room, Myra," he said, just as an old woman, dressed in black silk, and wearing a quaint bonnet appeared in the doorway of the other room. She gave him a quick signal—clenched fists, with upturned thumbs, pressed against her cheeks—and Varney knew that his confederates had arrived.

The old woman, who had entered from the alleyway, now turned back into the rear room, and as Myra entered it to inspect the Wedgewood she was busy stooping over a table to examine a spangled fan.

Varney, who had accompanied Myra, now turned toward the other room, where her mother was still struggling with her decision over the tea set.

"I must have dropped my gloves, Myra. Excuse me just a minute," he said, as he walked back, leaving the girl alone with the old woman.

Myra turned, surprised, as she heard a groan.

MYRA WAS TERROR-STRICKEN

The old creature had swayed weakly toward the table, which she gripped for support. The sympathetic girl ran to her side and put a supporting arm about her waist.

"Are you ill?" she inquired gently.

"I will be all right, when I get into the air, my child. Could you please help me to my car?" she answered weakly. The girl acquiesced, and supporting the other, walked slowly to the rear door. She was so taken by surprise that for the moment she did not realize how odd it was for the old woman to enter the shop from the alleyway, while riding in an automobile.

As she approached the car, supporting the supposed invalid, the chauffeur sprang out from his seat to hold open the door of the limousine.

Just as the old woman stepped inside, she suddenly caught Myra's arm, and dragged her after her. The chauffeur—none other than the Pedro, engaged by the High Master of the Black Order—pushed the girl's shoulders with tremendous force.

He slammed the door shut, and before Myra realized what had happened, the machine was speeding along the alley, while the old woman miraculously cured of her weakness, was sitting on the girl, holding her pinned to the bottom of the limousine with a surprising weight for one of her age.

Varney chatted with Mrs. Maynard for a few minutes in the front room of the curio shop.

With his usual good taste and chivalrous attentiveness he assisted the good lady in making a satisfactory choice, as well as purchasing a vase which almost duplicated the one which he had so unfortunately shattered.

"Where is Myra?" suddenly asked Mrs. Maynard, as she was relieved from the engross task of making a choice.

"Out in that other room, looking at the Wedgewood, isn't she?" and Varney walked nonchalantly to the doorway. "Myra, Myra! Your mother is ready to go home!"

There was no response, and Mrs. Maynard followed him anxiously, to peer into the empty room.

"Great Scot! She has gone!" exclaimed Varney, albeit with no dismay in his manner. "She must be playing a joke on us. I wonder if she isn't hiding behind some tall grandfather's clock?"

Mrs. Maynard had a presentiment of danger, and she called in a vexed tone: "Myra, Myra! Come out at once!"

But there was no response. They searched the place thoroughly, and finalyl went out to the chauffeur.

"Did Miss Myra come out, Dick?" asked Mrs. Maynard.

"No, ma'am. I was right here all the time and would have seen her if she had." The door was in full view of the chauffeur, and Mrs. Maynard was mystified and worried, as he persisted in his statement.

"All that she has done has been to play a prank," and Varney endeavored to comfort the anxious mother. "I'll wager that you will find her at home, even now. Perhaps she bought some antique and wanted to surprise you with it."

Mrs. Maynard shook her head, vexed. At her suggestion Varney remained at the shop, to wait for Myra's possible return while she ordered Dick to drive her home at top speed.

"Be sure to wait here until I telephone that she is not at home, Arthur. I don't dare let her go out without an escort," and the good lady began to cry.

The machine sped down the street, and Varney walked into the curio shop once more. After a few minutes, however, he quietly left the place and hurried to a telephone pay station. He up a number and was soon delivering a message that all was well.

"Good," came the snarling reply. "I had mistrusted you Varney. Now keep on with your task and I shall reward you as well as the others, for at last we have victory completely within our grasp."

The Varney returned to the street, to walk back to the curio shop. A frantic message on the telephone greeted him there. Mrs. Maynard had found no trace of Myra and begged him to notify the police at once. The conversation was abruptly terminated by hysterical sobbing, as the miserable mother gave way to her fright and tears.

Varney hung up the receiver, thanked the proprietor for his courtesy and walked out of the store. He turned the next corner and climbed into his own automobile which had strangely made its appearance there.

"The Master works without an error!" he muttered, as he threw on the speed, "and yet—and yet!"

The old nagging thoughts came back to him again. Despite the jealous fury of an hour before, his affection for Myra was reasserting itself.

"If I can only outwit him, without letting him suspect!" he muttered to himself, as he steered the car through narrow streets, along quiet roadways, to a farmhouse on the farthest outskirts of the city. "That Pedro showed signs of being a human being—perhaps I can get him to help me—for he fears the electric chair."

Varney drew up before the door of the house, and slipped inside, carefully muffling his face with a black handkerchief, and drawing an old slouch hat down over his forehead to shield his eyes from Myra's possible recognition.

Within the place, he found the woman, and Pedro waiting his arrival.

"She fought like a cat, said the woman, in a hoarse voice, "But, we quieted her. Now she is locked in the room, and she can't escape, for the windows are barred. I told her that no one would harm her if she remained quiet.

"What are you going to do now?"

"Poison or the knife!" hissed the villainous creature, her eyes sparking with a light which was almost maniacal in its cruelty. Varney shuddeered, and he noticed a queer expression on the face of Pedro.

But it seemed impossible now to interfere with the fate of the unfortunate Myra.

* * * * * * *

CHAPTER LXI.

Payson Alden's New Physic.

THE physician's laboratory work had been interrupted just when he was getting deepest interested in it, by the arrival of a strange looking young man.

"I am a psychic," the newcomer told him, "and was sent to you by your friend, Dr. Burnham, who has tried a number of experiments with me. He said that you would surely give me a trial, and that we might do some interesting work together."

"What is your peculiar line?" asked Alden, forcing himself to be agreeable, for, important as his work might be, he realized that these unexpected opportunities frequently turned out to be of value. "I am extremely busy today, and would like to have you come around some time when we can work better together."

"That's just it," said the visitor. "I was going to leave for the West tomorrow, but Dr. Burnham insisted that you might be able to help me in my work, and make it of interest to us both. I have discovered that I am especially strong along the line of telepathic haunts. I am a sensitive, although I have never done much else than find hidden objects, ride over roads blindfolded, using the spirit eyes of others to see."

"Very good," said Alden. "We'll try out and see what you can do!"

The young man was entirely different in type from the other mediums and mind-readers whom the physician had interviewed. His face was extremely pale. His manner and speech nervous and indecisive, while his features were weak. He was of a nature easily influenced by the minds of others, and in this respect, as Alden saw, undoubtedly especially sensitive to psychic influences, although lacking in the power of projective initiative. Here was the type who could record the thoughts and act on the commands of others, but never control them with his own force.

The first experiment was the choice of a word in the dictionary which the young man produced. Alden helped blindfolded, and then sat down in a chair facing the other man, as he picked out a random word. He closed the book, handed it to the psychic, and then concentrated his mind on the word. The blindfolded man opened the book, apparently without any definite purpose in picking the page, ran his fingers up and down the page, suddenly stopping at one line.

"There," he exclaimed, pointing out the word, "mentality." "Is that right?"

"Very good!" exclaimed Alden, agreeably surprised, "Now, we'll try hiding objects."

This method of telephathic effort they followed for some time. But just as they were getting interested in some new modes, the telehone jangld discordantly.

"Confound it!" muttered Alden, lifting the receiver from the hook and placing it on the table." I don't want to be disturbed. They can just say that I'm busy.' "

Little did he reck that it was the terror-stricken Mrs. Maynard, trying to reach him at this supreme moment of disaster.

And still less could he guess what was going on in the small farmhouse where the girl he loved was a prisoner.

Myra had peered into every nook and cranny of the room in wihch she was confined. But there seemed no way in which she could escape—no manner of communicating with the outside world. Suddenly she beheld something which sent a spark of hope into the blackness of her respair.

It was a tumbler, set upon a small table in the corner of the room.

"I wonder if I could use that as a crystal?" she muttered. She hurried to the table and sat down upon a delapidated chair before it. Inverting the tumbler, she gazed fixedly into the glass, which began to radiate facets of bright lights, as she applied the mental strength of concentration taught her by Alden. Dimly within the glass she caught a vision—it was that of two men. As she peered closer she saw that it was Payson Alden, talking to a blindfolded man.

Here, indeed, was a curious cross-current of telepathic influences.

"If I could only reach him," she murmured, "I know he is in his laboratory——"

But she was interrupted by the entrance of the woman who had made her captive. The woman was carrying a small tray, on which were two cups of milk and some sandwiches.

Myra hid the tumbler, for future experimenting under the table, as the woman turned her back to carefully shut the door.

"Here, my dear," were her suave words, " is a little nourishment. Don't be nervous, for no one will harm you, if you remain quiet for a few hours."

Myra loked suspiciously at the food, and backed timidly toward the old bed in the corner of the room.

She was not aware that Arthur Varney, well disguised in an old coat and a mask, was conversing earnestly with Pedro outside.

"I will drop the note," said Varney. "We must get rid of the woman somehow, or else go to the electric chair." The man winced at the last two words and agreed.

Varney and the other walked to the door and opened it. They entered it, to be greeted angrily by the woman. Myra, even more frightened at the muffled figures, controlled herself from screaming with difficulty.

"Get out of here!" cried the woman, angrily. She rushed at them and shoved them back through the doorway ,but as she followed them outside to berate them she did not notice the little ball of paper dropped by one of the men.

Myra saw it, however, and as the woman screeched her denunciations at the two men for interfering, she picked it up and unfolded the tiny note. Its message was short and startled the girl:

"Exchange the cups and pretend to be poisoned."

"I wonder if it can be some friend of Doctor Alden's," the girl mused. She heard the wordy altercation outside the door. There was not a minute to lose. She hurried toward the table and looked at the cups. One was old and cracked, without a handle. The other was new. To change them would undoubtedly excite suspicion.

Then, with feminine ingenuity, she bethought herself of the tumbler, hidden beneath. She brought it forth, poured the contents of the cracked cup into the tumbler, and then turned the milk in the good cup into the cracked one.

It was simple now to pour the milk in the tumbler into the newer cup, after carefully wiping it out with the hem of her gown. She replaced the cups as they had been on the tray, hiding the tumbler.

She turned away, just as the woman re-entered the room.

"Now, my dear, will you have some milk and sandwiches?" she asked, with a serpentine glitter in her dark eyes Myra timidly nodded. The women held forth the tray.

"I am afraid, unless you drink and eat some, too," faltered the girl.

"Oh, yes. I will do it," and the woman held out the uncracked cup to her. "I'll drink from the old one—you are company," and she smirked amiably.

Myra waited until the other had quaffed from the cracked cup and then she drank the contents of the one she held—not without a tremor. Remembering the contents of the note, she walked toward the bed and began to groan.

"Oh, that has made me ill!" she exclaimed, putting her hand to her head and pretending to stagger.

Teh woman laughed and retreated to the door, with a triumphant expression on her evil features. But suddenly it changed! The woman clawed at her own throat and gave an inarticulate cry, as the deadly poison began to take quick effect.

"You—changed—the——" she began, and then drew a dagger from the folds of her dress. Unsteadily she lurched toward Myra, who snatched up a chair, to ward off the other's attack. It was well that the woman's strength was waning; even as it was Myra had a terrible struggle to keep the maddened creature at a distance.

But the deadly draught suddenly took its final effect and the would-be murderess fell headlong to the floor, before the horrified girl.

The door opened slowly and the two muffled figures slipped in.

"The brothers have gone to get the Master," whispered Varney to Pedro. "Now we must use the pneumogastric clamp!"

The other walked toward Myra, telling her: "We are trying to save you, but you must let us hypnotize you first."

Myra objected, but the man had caught her about the shoulders and waist. Varney, disguised, was shoving the body of the dead woman under the bed, out of sight. Now he turned, and as his companion held Myra's head and body rigid, he drew forth a small U-shaped spring, which he clasped under Myra's hair, at the base of the skull. The girl tried to resist the hypnotic passes, but she was soon in a cataleptic state.

The sound of an automobile was heard outside.

"Now, beware the Master," said Varney, as they stretched the girl upon the bed. "That clasp on that nerve, with hypnotic catalepsis, produces suspended animation. He will believe she is dead."

Even as he spoke, the Master, accompanied by another of the Black Order, entered the room.

"Where is the woman?" he asked.

"She has gone to tell you of her success," said Varney. "But, at last you have succeeded."

The Master regarded the rigid form of the girl, felt her pulse, placed his ear to her bosom, and nodded approvingly, as he heard no flutter. He was strangely quiet in his triumph, but his eyes danced in wicked glee.

"You have done well, Varney and Pedro. I shall reward you. Bring in the sack and needle!" he called to the man outside. The member obeyed, with a large gunny sack, a ball of heavy twine, and some long needles.

"Now, sew her into that," cried the Master, "and we will dispose of the body in such a manner that we will be sure."

The Master had walked to the window, as the other brother left the room on some errand. The pontiff called after him and hurried out to give some additional instructions. As he did so, Varney called to Pedro. They quickly lifted the woman's body from underneath the bed substituting it for Myra's unconscious form. They placed the corpse within the sack and began to sew it up. The Master found them thus diligently engaged when he returned. Quick work was made of the task and they were soon speeding back toward the council chamber for the payment of the reward.

* * * * * * *

Alden's best experiment with the young psychic was suddenly interrupted by the man's exclamation: "There is some other power in this room here: It is a presence and it diverts me from the search."

The doctor was puzzled, but his bewilderment changed to consternation as Mrs. Maynard was announced. She weepvingly told of Myra's disapearance and begged the physician to help. The automobile was outside, she said, and they would take him anywhere. Alden snatched up a revolver and donned his coat. He was just leaving the psychic with a short promise to see him later, when the young man interrupted.

"Something tells me I can find her! It is something to do with the presence in this room!" he said. "Blindfold me and let me lead you."

Alden hesitated, and then his intuition prompted him to make the effort. He agreeed, and the young man, to his own and Mrs. Maynard's amazement, led them blindfolded as he was, down the stairs, with unerring steps, to the automobile.

"Let me drive!" he cried to the horrified chauffeur, as he clambered into the driver's seat.

"But you can't see with your eyes covered," objected Dick.

"I don't need to see. The spirit of a young woman is leading me," was the strange reply. They started off, with misgivings, but the psychic directed the car with unerring skill, taking daring turns, and cuts between passing vehicles, with an uncanny certainty. At last they drew up before the farm house, now apparently deserted. The psychic was trembling with nervous excitement, and he leaped from the seat before the others could slide open the door. He ran up the path to the house, followed by Alden and Mrs. Maynard.

"Too late!" groaned the doctor, as he followed the psychic into the empty room. But the young man, still hoodwinked, knelt down by the bed, and touched the hidden body of Myra. He and Alden drew it out, while Mrs. Maynard screamed.

"She is dead!" was her weak words, but Alden cried: "While there is life there is hope—see, she breathes!" He was holding a tiny mirror before her lips, and a slight moisture was deposited on the glass from her delicate breathing.

Vainly he tried to rouse her. It was evident that her coma was the result of hypnosis or a drug—he could not ascertain which. The psychic, still acting under the influence of the tremendous occult excitement, which had seemed to guide his every move, now sank into a chair and drew forth his dictionary. His finger reached a word and remained there.

"Read this!" he cried. "Read it!"

Mrs. Maynard reached over his shoulder and pronounced the word his trembling finger indicated.

"Pneumogastric!" she exclaimed. "What does that word mean, doctor?"

Alden started.

"Why, that's in the neck. I wonder" * * * He ran to the side of the girl, reaching around to discover the clamp. He removed it, with an exclamation of triumph, stroked her forehead, and snapped his fingers commandingly.

"Oh!" and the girl awakened with a start. "Where am I?"

Her mother rushed toward her joyously, as Alden caught the soft hand in his. Her return to the land of the living was as unexpected to Myra as to any one else.

And the failure of Pedro to consummate the well-laid scheme of the Master was even at this instant being punished within the council room of the Black Order. Varney had escaped suspicion by a hair's breadth. But the other man sank back lifeless, before the terrible occult power of the Master's extended hands, who had foolishly raised a knife against the evil ruler, to ward off his fury.

There was only one result—another scoundrel had been sent to the final reckoning. And the Master's malevolent will was more set than ever upon the death of the rescued Myra.

(To Be Continued Next Sunday.)

See this episode today at Hippodrome, 9th and N. Y. Ave.—Advt.

First and Second Episode Today, Georgia Theater, 3422 Ga. Ave. N. W. —Advt.

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THE MYSTERIES OF MYRA

AN INSPIRING NOVEL AND MOTION PICTURE DRAMA

Written by Hereward Carrington.

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Dramatized by Charles W. Goddard.

CHAPTER LXII.

Spiritualistic Phenomena.

DR. PAYSON ALDEN has discovered, to his great joy, a woman medium who answered all the requirements for an ideal "sensitive medium." For years he had sought vainly for such an one. Hundreds had applied to him, with varying claims, but most of them had been fraudulent, and his keen perceptions had shattered their trickeries. The woman now in his psychic laboratory, however, was unique. And he was reveling, in his professional way, in the eerie phenomena which she had already shown him.

She sat in a comfortable chair, with the lights turned low, red tissue paper shades covering them to make the "etheric atmosphere" the more conducive to occult work. The shades of the room were drawn, and the physician prepared to put her to the most severe test of all.

"I am getting tired," she said plaintively, as she crossed her arms nervously. "I will not be receptive very much longer. So you had best hurry."

"I do not wish to be unreasonable, Mrs. Palmer," gently answered the physician. "But if you knew what vital matters I am eager to investigate you would understand my insistence. Life and death are concerned in a very tragic case which I have been investigating. I feel that those in this life may be helped by their loved ones beyond the grave, if you can throw yourself into a real spiritualistic trance. We shall not be interrupted, as I have given my servants strict orders to—"

But, even as he spoke, the telephone jangled, and he impatiently walked toward the instrument.

Once before he had ignored the silvery summons, with the result that Myra had nearly lost her life through his abstraction in his studies.

"Yes, yes! Hello!" he called, irritably. Then his voice softened.

"Oh, it is you, Myra * * * well, of course I am glad to hear from you, but I am in the midst of some very interesting experiments * * * Well, I think it best for you to see a later trial, as you might disturb the medium," he continued.

There seemed a pleading argument at the other end of the wire. Alden shook his head as he responded in the negative.

Finally, he relented.

"All right, you may come. But hurry right on over, for Mrs. Palmer is getting tired. We will wait for you," and he hung up the received.

"We can rest for a few minutes," he told the medium. "That is the young lady who has been in such danger of late. Perhaps it is just as well that she is coming, for her presence in the room may perfect the spiritual connection which we desire."

Then he recounted to the woman a few of the harrowing incidents which had beclouded Myra Maynard's young life. At first the medium was timorous, but as Alden explained the implacable hatred with which the bloodthirsty Black Order had persecuted the girl her sympathies overcame her fear.

"Something tells me that I may be of greater help than I had supposed," she told him.

They had not long to wait before the Maynard automobile drew up before the physician's home to allow Myra and her mother hasten up the steps. The ladies were shown at once to the laboratory by the maid, who peeped fearfully into the room, and then lost no time in retreating from this queer sanctuary, which was regarded by the servants as a general meeting place for "ha'nts" and "banshees."

Alden introduced the newcomers, and then prepared for the final tests of mediumistic power.

Mrs. Maynard was visibly frightened, as Alden arranged the setting for Mrs. Palmer's supreme efforts in such a way as to prevent any trickeries. She had objected strenuously to attending any more of these terrifying demonstrations, but Myra's eager curiosity overrode her determination. Now, her usually placid face was twitching nervously, and she sat on the edge of her chair as though intuitively expecting some terrible thing to happen.

Alden had arranged a "cabinet" in a corner of the room, by stretching a black curtain across a horizontal support, reaching from one side wall to another, in such a way as to preclude all possibility of any assistance from outside the room. The cabiet extended to a height of about seven feet, so that they could see over the top of it.

"Now, Dan," he directed his assistant, "bring out the large scales and place them here before the cabinet."

Dan obeyed instructions, and the scales, with their balancing platform large enough to hold a chair, were set according to his (the physician's) instructions. A large net was then placed around the chair, and the medium stepped upon the scales, and Alden raised the net, completely encircling her in its firm meshes. He fastened the top of the net to the support above.

"Why all these curious preparations?" asked Myra.

"Because this is the only way in which which to absolutely make certain that there is no legerdermain or trick manipulation in a seance. The scales will indicate any departure of the medium from them, or any added weight in case she should use apparatus to help her in the manifestations. And the net precludes any use of her hands or feet about the room," explained the physician. "These are the scientific precautions which have betrayed hundreds of pretended mediums."

He hurried to the other side of the laboratory, and carried a small table to the side of the room near, but beyond arm-reach of the medium.

Upon this he placed a common school slate, within whose folded sides he had placed a slate pencil. He tied the sides of the slate firmly and sealed it, before being satisfied. Then from a cabinet he brought forth a tambourine and a mandolin. These he placed on the large table, fully twelve feet away from Mrs. Palmer's temporary platform on the scales.

As he looked about with satisfaction, another timid knock came from the doorway.

"Confound it! I must not be disturbed again," he muttered, angrily. "There will be a new maid in this house tomorrow!"

He strode impatiently to the door, unbolted it, and was startled to see the suave smile of Arthur Varney.

"I just took the liberty to come right up stairs," explained the intruder, blandly. "I told your maid it would be all right. I called to take Myra motoring, and butler told me she had come over here to see a spook performance. I never believed in them, and so I knew you wouldn't mind letting me have a reserved seat, as well."

Alden raged inwardly.

There was a certain shiftiness which he detected in Varney's shrewd eyes which belied the surface calm. But, after many hours of study of the man, Alden determined now to put him to the test. Perhaps, he thought, here was a blessing in disguise.

Without more ado, he instructed Dan to bring another chair, and with formal courtesy he waved Varney to a seat. Then he turned to Mrs. Palmer expectantly.

"Are you ready now?" he inquired, as he drew down the curtains of the windows.

"Yes, but with so many people in the room, I must have absolute darkness," she answered. "I am disturbed, and not able to concentrate as well as before."

Alden turned off the switch of the electric lights, and the room was in utter darkness, save for a dim light, covered with a black shade, which cast its rays upon the school slate on the table.

"Now, please do not utter a sound," he instructed his little audience, and he sat down to await developments.

There seemed a century-long delay, in which was audible only the sound of their breathing. Suddenly the table on which was placed the slate began to tilt, as though lifted by invisible fingers.

Mrs. Maynard gasped in fright, and her fingers tightened about Myra's arm, as she drew closer to the girl.

Varney's nervousness increased, fortunately for him, hidden by the darkness of the room.

Now the table rose completely from the floor, and then began to move about the room, with little bumps against the other furniture.

Not a sound came from the medium, who was apparently unconscious. Alden stepped softly up to examine the scales more than once, and touching his fingers to the balance seemed satisfied.

Suddenly there was a tinkle of musical chords. It seemed as though an eerie hand had been drawn across the strings of the banjo.

Mrs. Maynard groaned, as she cowered still nearer to Myra. Unafraid, the girl watched the movement of the table, under the dull glow of the little light. At last it came to rest, many feet away from its original position.

Now there came a startling blast from the trumpet, which was in utter darkness. It seemed to be carried about the room, above their heads, as the brazen sounds came from varying directions.

Varney gave vent to a terrified grunt, and backed against the wall. Dan Alden's assistant, followed suit, while Alden knelt on the floor in the endeavor to detect any trickeries of the surprising medium.

The pandemonium of sounds increased. There were knocks on the table, stampings on the floor and wall, from all directions. It seemed as though a company of spirits must be participating in this gruesome festival. The banjo twanged discordantly, as it fluttered about their heads; the trumpet emitted more blasts than ever. Mrs. Maynard now covered her face with her hands, fearing some still more blood-curdling demonstration.

Suddenly the racket subsided.

Alden and his guests turned their eyes toward the slate, which now appeared floating from the table into the air!

There was a slight grating sound!

"I heard the pencil writing inside," exclaimed Myra, excitely.

"Good!" said Alden, in a whisper, "but don't disturb it!"

He leaned forward to look at the scales again, as best he could in the faint luminosity. As he did so Arthur Varney stepped forward, snatched the slate and broke the seals. He opened it and held it beneath the dim rays of the covered lamp.

He read a startling message:

"Varney is a member of the Black Order, Beware! Your Father."

With a quick movement, just as Alden faced about, he rubbed the message from it and laid it down upon the table with a nervous laugh.

"What do you mean by interfering with my work?" cried the physician stridently.

"It was—just silly stuff. I wanted—to—see it done again," stammered Varney in confusion.

Alden sprang toward him, his fist clenched.

"You confounded idiot!" he cried, with a terrible tone in his usually placid voice. "I've had enough of your interruptions. I didn't invite you here, and this is not the first time you have deliberately intruded."

Myra sprang to his side and caught the muscular arm, just as it was drawn back for a vengeful thrust.

"Payson! Payson!" she cautioned. "Don't forget yourself! Arthur is your guest."

Varney stepped back. He realized the awkwardness of the situation, and, acting under orders from his evil ruler as he was, he knew that this was no time for a crippling of the secret machinations of the master.

"Guest or no guest, if he doesn't get out of my house, I'll throw him out of a window!" cried the physician. He turned toward his assistant. "Dan, take this fellow downstairs and kick him out if he doesn't hustle."

Varney muttered an imprecation under his breath, but gladly grasped the opportunity which he had been waiting.

"Myra, I hope that you——" he began, as he caught up his hat and walking stick.

But the girl indignantly interrupted.

"Arthur Varney, your hopes have nothing to do with me any more," and she turned away, to lay a soothing hand upon the furious physician's arm.

Varney laughed scornfully, as he walked through the door, held open by Dan, whose twitching fingers longed to inclose the neatly collared throat.

Dan followed him downstairs with unconcealed irascibility, and, as he slammed the door behind the unwelcome guest he saw through the curtains the malevolent sneer with which the departing one turned to face the house for an instant.

"Dat guy ain't after no good for de guvnor," he muttered. "I'd enjoy croakin' him myself," which remark evidenced an understanding of human nature much more correct than his grammar.

CHAPTER LXIII.

The Birth of a Frankenstein.

WITHIN the somber shades of Black Order council rooms unusual ceremonies were being conducted by the high master and a picked group of his satellites.

It was seldom that the evil pontiff mingled with his underlings, but great plans were now afoot.

"This is the supreme effort of our order," he told the assembled brethren. "All your wills and wicked souls must be concentrated upon our task, for today we ascend to the supreme step of occult power."

Fourteen of the members, wearing their flowing black gowns, and the various hoods, from which dangled the triangular discs over the crime-seamed foreheads, now waited his every command with rapt attention.

Their numbers had been sadly decimated of late by the intrepid campaigning of Alden. Realizing the need for absolute secrecy and trust, the master had forbidden the initiation of new members, to avoid a repetition of the "spying" work of Haji, Alden's ill-fated Hindu friend.

And so it was that they realized that their fates hung upon the toil of this momentous hour. Never before had their obedience been so implicit, their wills so subjugated to the supremity of the criminal genius who presided. And never before had the High Master himself realized that in the handsome and debonair man of science had he found a supreme antagonist "worthy of his steel!"

He led them into the sanctity of his throne room now, and arranged them in a triangular position, of which he, the apex, was facing a cloth-covered cabinet in a corner of the room.

At a signal, and an incantation from wa athe deity of the Devil Worshipers, ting crosslegged, as they bowed in rhythmic unison.

The Master gave first the sign of their dread order, clenched fists, pressed against cheeks, with thumbs upturned, in semblance of the horned one who the Master, they sank to the floor, sit- Then for many minutes they chanted the unholy mantra of the brotherhood.

Thus, concentrating on the mysterious words, their minds were attuned to the ruling force of the High Master. Now he spoke, in a voice cavernous in its ponderous, overwhelming vibration:

"Born of the wills of fifteen men, he will strike with the power of ten!"

Now were these words taken up as the chant, while the Master led them in the slow swinging of their bodies. Hours seemed to pass, although it was a comparatively short lapse of time. Finally, the Master rose slowly to his feet, and at a gesture of command the men walked slowly across the room, to stand behind him.

The Master extended his left hand, pointing it toward the empty cabinet.

Suddenly a spark, and then more, shot from his bony fingers—the accumulated power of creative evil!

As the man nearest him placed his left hand upon the Master's shoulder, the flow of the dazzling flashes increased in brilliancy and luminosity.

One after another the breathren joined this curious human chain, adding each time to the malevolent strength or magnetism which was discharged in the direction of their ruler.

And as they stood there still chanting the words of creation, a figure began to appear within the shelter of the cabinet. At first it bore little semblance to anything human.

But as their titanic efforts continued with more intense effort, and a rising power of their weird cries, it assumed the shape of a gigantic man.

More and more dense it grew, until in the roseate light of the swinging braziers suspended from the stone ceiling above, it moved and raised its head—a horrible physiognomy combining in the snarled and monstrous features an expression of indomitable power, supreme bestiality, and absolute emptiness of feeling or thought!

"It is the Thought Monster! I have created him well!" cried the Master, dropping his arm now.

His satellites did the same, and regarded the hube beast in growing terror. There was a grewsome menace in that great hulk of concentrated evil, which even these uncanny devotees realized with shudders of fear.

The members swayed wearily, as though they had given forth the vitality of their souls, while the High Master spoke to the monster within.

"Come forth! Born of the strength of fifteen men, your strength is the strength of ten!" was his raucous cry.

And the Monster garbed in a long gray robe, felt of his huge arms, of his rugged face, and stepped toward his creator.

An expression of childish, if bestial, delight overspread the hideous features, as he advanced, stretching out the great stubby fingers of his hand toward the nearest member.

The black robed brother gave a cry of pain and sprang backward, tripping over a fold of his gown as he did so. With the agility of an orang-outang the monster sprang forward fully ten feet, catching the screaming member with a vice-like grip.

He was lifted in the air as easily as a babe, and before the Master could raise the whip which had been concealed within his girdle, the great beast was punching, twisting and pinching the hapless brother with squeals of hideous glee.

The Master rushed forward now, lashing the face of the brute with well-directed blows of the cutting lash.

The monster dropped the victim and with a gnashing of the great tusks, turned toward the ruler of the Black Order with outstretched arms.

"You must obey, for I created you!" cried the Master, with another blow.

The monster paused, and his fury dissolved into childish gratitude as he knelt before the Master to kiss his hands, stroke the silken robe and gurgle in puerile glee.

Just then the scintillation of light from the shiny metal triangle on the hood of a brother's garb attracted his attention. The great man-beast, ephemeral in his moods and half thoughts, now rose and curiosly examined the glittering object.

At this juncture Arthur Varney suddenly entered the outer chamber through the revolving trap door, aided by an outpost left to guard the portal.

Without the usual ritual, he rushed excitedly into the throne room, crying: "Master! Master! All is lost! The spirit of Myra Maynard's father is at the seance in Aldens laboratory. Myra and Mrs. Maynard are there, too."

He hurriedly explained his close escape from betrayal and then, with a few keen questions, the Master raised hand for silence. He remained lost in deep thought, while the monster sat squatted on the floor, tossing his head from side to side like an imprisoned beast of the jungle.

Varney, his excitement momentarily calmed, now turned to a fellow in the order to ask about the curious beast. And, as a whispered explanation followed, the High Master's face writhed into a leer of triumphant confidence.

"It is well. We must hypnotize the thought monster and let him materialize at the seance. Then he shall destroy Myra and Alden. We have victory in our hands at last. There is no checkmate now!" he exclaimed.

He called to the monster, who looked up into the commanding stare of the fixed black eyes. The Master's hands described curious circles in the air, as he began the task of throwing the great beast into a cataleptic state. It was more difficult than he had supposed, for the monster was so supreme in evil, so lacking in intellect, that his task was slower than it would have been with a human being!

CHAPTER LXIV.

The Father Returns.

IN the quite of the laboratory, Alden and his guests had recovered their poise, after the disturbing exit Varney. The physician refrained from expresing the conslusion at which he had finally arrived. Had it not been for his belief that some supreme result was to come from this surprising seance, he would have followed the other man, and notified the police. For at last his suspicions had been justified.

"I will get him later, for he will come into a trap again!" he told himself.

And so he addressed himself to the medium, who was still in the strange icy stupor of the transported sensitive. Alden knew that despite her catalepsy, shre was subjected to externals, to a certain extent. He feared that the unpleasant diversion might have broken the flow of her connection with the Unseen Universe.

Yet he persevered. Now, he spoke to her gently.

"Please bring back a message from Myra's father," he begged, his lips close to her ear.

There was no reply but suddenly the curtains of the protected cabinet swayed, and a cool wind blew them out toward him. Myra and Mrs. Maynard gripped each other's hands nervously. Then, without warning, the curtains parted and a figure appeared, visible to them all!

The medium was now writhing in a spasm of agony.

The shade walked forth from the canopy and dimly glowing as though composed of some phosphorescent material it became more visible to them.

It was Myra Maynard's father!

Mrs. Maynard gave a low groan, and toppled forward, her face pressing against Myra's arm, which trembled as in an ague while she endeavored to support the sobbing woman.

"Myra, I am your father's spirit!" came the words, audible and yet scarcely more like a human voice than the whisper of tree tops nodding in the breeze of a still night. "I warn you that Arthur Varney is a member of the Black Order."

"Oh, father, it can't be true!" gasped Myra but the spirit nodded in solemn affirmation, as its hand rested upon the girl's golden head.

Alden was kneeling on the floor beside the scales, to get a closer, analytical view of the medium during this astounding performance. Nothing missed his scientific eyes. He would have voiced a query, when the spirit addressed Myra once more.

"I must go—some one else is coming—beware! beware!" it said as it retreated toward the curtains and faded from view. Mrs. Maynard had lost consciousness in this soul-racking moment, and Myra was sobbing hysterically now.

Alden sprang to his feet, and for some inexplicable reason, backed to the table, where he drew his revolver from the drawer.

A new figure appeared before them now. It was the same great monster, in human form, which had left in astral ways the throne room of the Black Order a few seconds before.

Myra was speechless and spellbound, as the tears coursed down her face. The dead weight of her senseless mother bore her down, and yet she could not move a muscle from that terrorized embrace.

"Who are you?" gasped Alden his lips parched and his voice cracking, as he spoke.

The monster spread its great arms and answered in thundering tones:

"Born of the wills of fifteen men, I strike with the strength of ten!"

Before Alden could grasp the meaning of it all, the monster seized the table, and raised it high in air. It was thrown down with an ear splitting crash. The beast caught up a chair and crushed it between the great fingers as though it had been made of straw. Now it turned its baleful eyes toward Myra, and Alden finally understood the fearful portent.

Here was a Frankenstein of the Master's creation, sent to destroy them. He drew his revolver and aimed for the great chest of the gray-robed figure. The monster winced, as the bullet was spent, but it rushed at him with increased fury.

Alden dodged the ponderous reach of the swinging arm, and ran trough the door of the laboratory into the other chamber.

Dan, who had returned to the laboratory, had presence of mind enough to slam the door and bolt it, as the monster sped afte rthe adroit Alden. Then he turned to assist Myra in bringing her mother to consciousness.

Alden had sent two more bullets into the hulk which pursued him, but to no avail. They seemed to give pain, but to interfere with the beast's progress not in the least.

Suddenly a curious diversion saved him, as he had retreated into a corner of the ante-chamber. The monster spied a mirror, and the flashing of its reflected light caught his childish fancy. The monster stopped, picked it up and gurgled with delight at the reflection of his brutish face.

An idea struck Alden, whose mind was working with lightning speed, in this the supreme climax of his fight. He ran for the door which led to the black-walled room which contained his hypnotizing machine. As he entered this he sent a bullet which shattered the mirror in the hands of the giant, and another into the brute's face. A great hand was clapped upward in pain and an agonized howl emitted from the thick lips. The monster charged at him, but Alden had slammed the door and bolted it inside.

He knew that a few seconds only were left to him, for the evil Titan was invincible!

Inside the room he switched off all the lights, except those connecting with the great wheel of mirror-planes. He hear da crash of woodwork behind him.

The light from the other room shot through a broken panel, accompanying a protruding fist. Alden shot at the fist!

There was another crash, and the monster broke through the door. The physician sprang back into a dark corner and awaited developments, hoping against hoep as the great beast dashed furiously into the room!

CHAPTER LXV.

Checkmate!

WITHIN the inner sanctuary of the Black Order rooms the Master was giving Varney hurried instructions. He held two curious coats, looking more than anything else, like coats of mail, such as the mediaeval swordsmen used. They were tunics, covered with sparkling prisms of glass, and the ruler of the Black Order hurriedly donned his own. On the floor lay two shields, made of mirrors, strangely wrought. One of these he lifted, and adjusted over his left arm. Then he raised a large black tube, in one end of which was adjusted a lens. He pressed a button and a great ray of green light shot forth.

Varney picked up the mate of the bulb light and looked into the lens curiously.

"Be careful, Varney! The rays of that light are fatal to mortal and spirit! It is the deadly luminosity of science. Do not point it at me or at yourself. The monster will soon return from its mission, and we must destroy it. Put on your coat, as I have done, take the mirrorshields, and go in the outer room. When the monster returns call to me and come in here. Then we will kill it and we are victorious in our long task!"

The Master chuckled, hopefully. But Varney was not so certain, as he awkwardly adjusted the uncouth and glittering garment. He retired to the outer council chamber, to await the great combat, with fear tearing at his evil heart.

* * * * * * *

Alden's plan had worked!

The thought monster, its eyes caught by the bewildering facets of light which shot from the revolving mirrors of the illuminated wheel, paused before it in dumb amazement. Gradually the hypnotic power of the scientific machine asserted itself, and the monster became rigid. The physician ran forward, not a moment to lose. A few swift passes of his hands, and he knew that he had conquered the beast of evil.

"Go back and destroy the evil men who made you!" commanded the physician. The monster, dazed and still semi-rigid, obeyed, walking back through the shattered door. Down the steps at the physician's guidance it went, and then drawn on by the strange power of hypnosis it sped down the street, across the intervening stretch of the country, unheeding the strange terror of people who beheld it and shrank away.

Through the devious paths, to the deep woods of the suburban stretch of uncultivated woodland under which the subterranean chambers of the Black Order were built, the monster went.

At it approached the culvert, through which the members made their first entrance to the council chamber, it spied a member of the Order climbing out.

A crunch of bones and an agonized scream and the member had gone to his eternal punishment!

Through the dark passage, led by its supernatural instinct, the thought monster raced, to the small chamber beneath the revolving platform. Without warning it was suddenly jerked downward by the inhuman strength of the great brute. The member on guard above it fell fairly into the arms of the murderous creature. A quick hug, and another victim had paid the penalty!

The monster now raised its huge head through the opening and sprang into the room above. The monster peered about the empty room, and then in its maniacal fury, began to smash every vestige of furniture in the chamber. It stopped suddenly and hid behind the altar, just as Arthur Varney came through the curtains from another room to investigate the noise.

There was no one in sight, and taken off his guard, Varney dropped the ray of the destructive light to the ground.

The monster reached over the altar, drew his body quickly behind it. There was an agonized shriek, as the scoundrel breathed his last, and the hideous brute stood up, to fling his lifeless body across the room. It ran toward him then, to study with interest the bespangled coat and the mirror.

As a gorilla might have done, it curiously drew off the coat and placed it about its own huge shoulders, picked up the mirror shield, and lifted the bulb light, with curiosity.

There came the clang of a brazen gong from within. The Master could not understand the failure of his minions to reply. He had expected the thought monster to reincarnate in the throne room from which he had been projected. But, as he suddenly looked toward the door, he beheld the great beast, attired in the morror coat, armed with the shield and bearing the fatal light!

The Master, with a curse of rage, sprang toward a switch and the room was in darkness. Then suddenly the green ray of murderous light shot from the holder, and the monster imitated him. The two strange gladiators, in the tense darkness, howling with rage, battled each other for many minutes, covering their faces with the shields. But the rays had done their work, in the swift flashes of the struggle, and the monster sank to the stone floor with a groan.

"I am dying!" muttered the High Master, as he staggered toward the doorway. He had barely strength then to strike the gong, weaker and weaker with each movement.

This time his summons was answered, and from an inner chamber several of the brethren came running forth. They were terror-stricken, as they saw the pallid face of the Master, beneath the rays of the lights which he had again switched on.

"Open the door behind that curtain!" he ordered weakly, "and bear me inside!"

They obeyed him in surprise. It was evident that they had never seen the big room, furnished in Oriental magnificence, which lay on the other side of that unsuspected portal.

They placed his weak body upon a divan. He pointed a trembling finger at another tapestry, and called once more.

"Open the door behind there!" he ordered, as his hand sank back on a cushion. They obeyed again.

A barred door met their gaze and, as they swung it back, the figure of a woman, swatched in Oriental draperies, her face covered after the manner of Turkish women, timidly entered the room.

The woman caught up a poiniard from its scabbard where it was hung upon the wall, as a decoration. She stealthily approached the recumbent Master, a look of hatred flashing from the black eyes. He looked up, as she neared him, his gaze resting upon her strangely.

"I am dying, I who have wronged you. Forgive me before I go to my punishment," and there was a faint smile on his drawn face. The woman dropped the dagger and knelt before him as the members looked on in surprise. The Master turned toward them now.

"I make this woman heir to all my power," he said weakly. "To hear her is to obey! Now each of you shall avenge my death, or die in the attempt. Farewell!"

As the men knelt before him, returning the thumb symbol of the order, he struggled to rise. His limbs stiffened, there was a hollow rattle in his throat, and he stiffened out in death, as his body sank to the floor!

* * * * * * *

In Alden's laboratory, Mrs. Maynard had been restored to consciousness, and the doctor was calming her nerves with a little medicine. The place was a wreck, but there was a triumphant smile on the physician's face.

He walked to Myra, who was trying to bring herself to command of her own excited feelings by gazing out of the window at the doctor's garden.

"It's all over now, I am sure," he said. "But, stop—I have an idea!" He picked up a crystal ball from a shelf which had not ben demolished by the monster. "Look here, and see if you can get a vision of news to us."

Myra concentrated upon the sparkling globe, and suddenly cried out, in alarm:

"It is the Master face! The eyes are closed—the cheeks sunk—he seems dead!"

Alden nodded.

"If the Master is dead there is nothing more to fear—nothing more to fear!" he said softly.

But Myra saw a new face in the mirror depths of the crystal. It was that of a woman, with Oriental swathings about her face and her thumbs upturned from clenched fists on either side of her head.

"Oh!" she screamed, but Alden heeded her not. He put his strong arms about her shoulder and drew the sweet face upward to his own.

"Myra, little Myra! Do you see anything in the crystal of my eyes," he asked softly.

She looked at him for a wonderful second—a sweet Eternity of Paradise—and then dropped the burning glance, as the golden curls were pressed against his broad shoulders.

"I only see," she murmured, "I only see the reflection of what is in my own eyes."

"And what is that?"

"My love for you, dear. My love for you!"

THE END.

See this episode today at Hippodrome, 9th and N. Y. Ave.—Advt.

Third Episode Today, Georgia Theater, 3422 Ga. Ave. N. W.—Advt.

STARS OF THE PHOTOPLAY

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VIOLA DANA
CRANDALL'S SAVOY
ALICE BRADY
CRANDALL'S 9th & E
CENTER
HARRY CAREY
LEADER & CENTRAL PARK

BLACKLIST ANSWER CONSIDERED EVASIVE

British Reply Limits Boycott, But Ignores Question of Right Raised by U. S.

England's preliminary reply today to President Wilson's protest against her blacklisting of certain American firms, doesn't hit the mark, in the opinion of officials here.

The preliminary reply, to be followed shortly by a detailed explanation of the British position, was in the form of formal assurances handed the State Department yesterday by Ambassador Spring-Rice.

Although these assurances definitely limit the blacklist to the published firms, the memorandum ignores the question of right, moral or otherwise, to blacklist American firms, regardless of their trade connections or financial control.

The British position, as the memorandum declares, is that the blacklist in its limited operation will not harm American trade as a whole.

Regarding the principle and President Wilson's position that American firms can trade wherever they please, Great Britain claims that is a matter to be threshed out by diplomatic negotiations, once the danger of actual financial loss is removed.

In proof of the guarantees given, the memorandum cites several cases of the treatment accorded blacklisted firms allowed to fill standing contracts and collect standing credit.

On this point, however, and the fate of neutrals dealing with blacklisted firms, England reserves the right to determine her course of action, guided by her own decision on whether or not such neutrals are of service to enemy countries.

The reply given the State Department by Spring-Rice is as follows:

"There is no idea of blacklisting a neutral firm merely because it continues to do busines with a firm that is blacklisted, but if a neutral firm habitually and systematically acted as a cover for a blacklisted firm and so caused indirect trading between British firms and blacklisted firms, the case would be different.

"Regarding payment to blacklisted firms, our action does not affect payment to neutrals and we habitually grant licenses to British firms to pay current debts to blacklisted firms, unless it is clear beyond doubt that such payment would be passed on to or create credit for enemies in enemy territory."

King George's Footmen Die in the "Big Push"

LONDON, July 30.—Among the names in the casualty list resulting from the "big push" by the British on the western front appear two of King George's footmen, who at the outbreak of the war joined the colors with a number of others at Buckingham Palace.

Sergeant Kennedy and Sergeant Church are reported as "killed in action." Both quickly became efficient in their military duties and were soon promoted to the rank of sergeant. A large number of the King's servants from his Sandringham estate were killed in action at Gallipoli.

Worked for Chicago Since 1852—Gets First Pension

CHICAGO, July 30.—John Agnew, eighty-five years old, who until July 1 this year had been a city employe since 1852, received yesterday a check which was the first payment by the municipal pension board under the pension act passed five years ago.

The presentation was made by Mayor Thompson. Mr. Agnew's sixty-four years of municipal service began with membership in the volunteer fire department.

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STIELOW GIVEN STAY UNTIL NEXT MONTH

District Attorney Ordered to Show Cause Why He Should Be Executed.

NEW YORK, July 30.—Three times made ready for death in Sing Sing's electric chair, Charles Stielow, convicted of murdering a farmer and his housekeeper in Orleans county, has been given at least three more weeks of life.

Supreme Court Justice Guy ordered the district attorney of Orleans county to show cause on August 23 why Stielow should be electrocuted.

The long stay of execution came after nearly two days and a night of ceaseless effort by five men and one woman to save the man who Friday night kissed his wife and three kiddies good-by for all time.

Those responsible for Justice Guy's ruling are Misha Applebaum, head of the Humanitarian League; James W. Osborne, former assistant district attorney here; David White, of Medina; Stewart M. Kohn, attorney for the Mutual Welfare League; Henry W. Merchant, Warden Osborne's attorney, and Inez Milholland Boissevain.

The five based their day and night arguments to Justice Guy on the ground that Stielow's so-called confession contained a hundred or more words that he had never heard and that the stolid, heavy-jowled German, even if guilty, should not be killed, since his mentality is that of a mere stripling youth.

The fight to save "Big" Stielow's life has been one of the most dramatic in Sing Sing's death house history. After the first two stays he was scheduled to die "some time during the week beginning July 24."

Such an edict generally sends a death-cell occupant off through "the little green door" to the next world about daylight Monday morning. But, it being optional with prison officials, whether a man dies Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday, and everyone in Sing Sing being convinced of Stielow's innocence, his "taking off" was postponed until 6 yesterday morning.

Dry-eyed, he told his wife and three babies good-by about midnight Friday, and the little woman went "outside" to await the husband's body.

Less than two hours before the time set for the electrocution Justice Guy called it off.

EXPERT SAYS CANAL MAY BE DOOMED

"If Cut Is On Gigantic Bog, Nothing Can Be Done."

LONDON, July 30—Col. Norton Griffiths, M. P., a widely known engineer, says in a Weekly Dispatch interview regarding the Panama Canal:

"We await further developments with sympathetic interest before accepting ominous reports that the present canal is doomed.

"If the subsoil underlying Gaillard Cut is a gigantic bog, as some alarmist statements assert, then this particular route seems hopeless. No dredging in the works would relieve the situation for always, as now, there will be more earth to remove, and it will be a case of dredging forever with no positive result.

"Until we know whether are not the reports are true, it would be premature to pass judgment."

IT'S EITHER DANDRUFF OR HAIR

You Can't Have Both For Long

Look at your coat collar. If it shows evidence of dandruff you can take it as a sure sign of coming baldness unless you take steps to prevent it.

When the hair threatens to leave you can't afford to take any chances. Go to O'Donnell's Drug Store, 904 F Street, and ask for a 50c bottle of Speiser's Scalp Tonic. Use it according to directions, and in a reasonable time dandruff, falling hair, and irritations of the scalp and skin will disappear and the growth of the hair will be promoted. Mr. O'Donnell is so certain of the merits of Speiser's Scalp Tonic that he'll gladly refund your money if it fails.

Avoid preparations containing alkalis (the presence of alkali is made known by the foaming of the liquid) or cocoanut oil. Be on the safe side—use Speiser's Scalp Tonic only.—Advt.

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